

# IQBAL:

## THE POET AND HIS MESSAGE

BY

SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA

کہتا ہوں وہی بات سمجھتا ہوں جسے حق

"I speak out what I understand (and regard) as Truth".

—Iqbal.

"I must not honor a man more than I honor Truth, but must utter what I have to say".

—Plato. (*The Republic*).

"There is only one right way of persuading, and that is to present what is true in such a way that nothing will prevent it from being seen, except the desire to remain in darkness."

—From Dr. A. C. Bouquet's *Comparative Religion*, 1941.

ALAVI BOOK DEPOT

Printed by  
RAMZAN ALI SHAH at the National Press  
Allahabad.

## THE AUTHOR

Lt. Col. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, of the Middle Temple Esquire, Barrister-at-law, (1893); Founder-Editor of the *Hindustan Review* (since 1900); Elected Member of the Imperial Legislative Council (1910-20); Elected Member Indian Legislative Assembly, and its First Elected Deputy President (1921); Finance and Law Member of the Bihar and Orissa Government as Governor's Executive Councillor, (1921-26); Leader of the Opposition Behar and Orissa Legislative Council (1930-1936); Vice-Chancellor Patna University (1936-1944); President of the Inter-University Board of India (1944); Life Senator of the Patna University (1945); Elected Representative of the Patna University in the Bihar Legislative Assembly, since 1937; Doctor of Literature *honoris causa* of the Allahabad University (1937); Elected Member of the Constituent Assembly by the Bihar Legislative Assembly (1946); Provisional President Constituent Assembly of India (1946). Born 10th November 1871; Educated at the Patna College, and the City College, Calcutta, (1888-92); Advocate of the Calcutta High Court, 1893; of the Allahabad High Court, 1896, and the Patna High Court, 1916; Presided over the Bihar Provincial Political Conference held at Bhagalpur in 1909, and at the United Provinces Political Conference held at Cawnpore in 1913. Was especially invited, while in London in 1933, to appear before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Reforms, and submitted a lengthy memorandum on the White Paper from the standpoint of constitutional nationalists; Convocation Lecturer at the Lucknow University, 1935; at the Nagpur University,

1937 ; and the Utkal University (Cuttack), in 1944. Publications : " The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar " (1906) ; " Speeches and Writings of Sachchidananda Sinha " (1935), second enlarged edition (1942) ; " Kashmir : The Playground of Asia " (1942), third enlarged edition (1947) ; and " Some Eminent Bihar Contemporaries " (1944.) Address : Sinha Library Road, Patna, and also 7 Elgin Road, Allahabad.

---



# CONTENTS.

Preface : By the Author	...	I—VIII.
-------------------------	-----	---------

## *Introductory Appraisals :—*

1. Introduction to Dr Sinha's "Iqbal". By Mirza Saminllah Beg (Nawab Yar Jung Bahadur)	IX—XXX
2. First Impressions of Dr. Sinha's "Iqbal". By the Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, K. C S I., D. C. L., (Oxon)	XXXI—XXXV
3. A Critical Appreciation of Dr. Sinha's "Iqbal". By Dr. Amaranatha Jha, M. A. D. Litt.	XXXVI—XLII

Page.

## Chapter I.

What is Critical Appraisal ? Explanatory and Introductory	...	...	1
---	-----	-----	---

## Chapter II.

Iqbal's Career, Works, and Personality	...	16
--	-----	----

## Chapter III.

The Greatness of Iqbal : Some Testimonies and Comments	...	...	24
--	-----	-----	----

## Chapter IV

Iqbal as "A Poet of India"	...	41
----------------------------	-----	----

## Chapter V

Iqbal's Religious Background	...	57
------------------------------	-----	----

## Chapter VI.

Iqbal's Philosophical Background	...	64
----------------------------------	-----	----

## Chapter VII

Iqbal's Political Background	...	79
------------------------------	-----	----

## Chapter VIII

Iqbal's Basic Sentiments	...	90
--------------------------	-----	----

## Chapter IX

Some Samples of Iqbal's Sentiments	...	97
------------------------------------	-----	----

## ( II )

### Chapter X

The Literary Value of Iqbal's Persian Poetry ...	944.
--	------

### Chapter XI

The Literary Value of Iqbal's Urdu Poetry ...	945.
---	------

### Chapter XII

A Study of Iqbal's Philosophic Theories ...	149.
---	------

### Chapter XIII

Iqbal's Attitude towards Mysticism or Sufism ...	172
--	-----

### Chapter XIV

Iqbal's Works and Non-Muslim Readers ...	184
--	-----

### Chapter XV

Iqbal's Legacy and its Future ...	204
-----------------------------------	-----

### Chapter XVI

Ghalib, Hali, and Iqbal Compared ...	214
--------------------------------------	-----

### Chapter XVII

Iqbal and Some Great Poets ...	280
--------------------------------	-----

### Chapter XVIII

Differences Due to Divergence in Interpretation ...	245
---	-----

### Chapter XIX

The Author's Interpretation of Islam ...	256
--	-----

### Chapter XX

Iqbal's Interpretation of Islam ...	279
-------------------------------------	-----

### Chapter XXI

Some Critical Estimates of Iqbal ...	299
--------------------------------------	-----

### Chapter XXII

Iqbal's Position as a Poet-Philosopher ...	315
--	-----

### Chapter XXIII

Iqbal and the Cultural Unity of India ...	331
---	-----

### Chapter XXIV

Iqbal and Patriotism ...	358
--------------------------	-----

### Chapter XXV

Iqbal and the Indo-Muslim Renaissance ...	377
---	-----

### Chapter XXVI

Iqbal and Humanism ...	413
------------------------	-----

### Chapter XXVII

The Popularity of Iqbal ...	449
-----------------------------	-----

# ( III )

## Chapter XXVIII

Page.

st words : Truth, Tolerance, and Unity ... 460

### Aft-Word :

it) Valedictory Communication to the Aothor :

st Dr. Sir Ahmed Husain, Nawab Amio Jung

sador, K. C. I. E., C. S. I., M. A., LL. D. ... 470

### Appendices.

I. Iqbal and Sir Fazle Hussain ... 479

II. A Stody in " Uncritical Landation " ... 483

III. Annotated Bibliographical References ... 486



## PREFACE

" A preface is more than an author can resist, for it is the reward of his labours. When the foundation stone is laid, the architect appears with his plans, and struts for an hour before the public eye. So with the writer in his preface : he may have never a word to say, but he must show himself a moment in the portico, hat in hand, and with an urbane demeanour ".

From the Preface to *An Inland Voyage*, by  
Robert Louis Stevenson.

The *raison-d'être* of this work is set out at some length in the first chapter of the book, and nothing more need be said about it in this Preface, beyond stating my conviction that, as nearly nine years have passed since Iqbal's death (in April, 1938), I feel that time has arrived to attempt a *critical* appraisal of his works—as distinguished from the *laudatory*. I do not expect that all readers of this thesis will agree with every thing that is said in it, but I trust that a perusal of it may contribute, in howsoever small a measure, towards a juster appreciation of Iqbal, as a poet and thinker, than has been possible till now, for want of a proper critical standard among writers on Iqbal. I may add that this disquisition is based not only on a careful study of the poet's writings—which are enumerated and discussed in this book—but also of the literature (including contributions to the press) that had appeared about Iqbal in English, as well as in Urdu. A bibliography of the English works consulted, or referred to, is appended to the text, but it has not been considered necessary to include in it periodicals

(though reference is made, in the text, to the more important of them), because of their inaccessibility to the average reader. The bibliography is comprehensive, and its object is to enable the reader to form, by a careful study of the works mentioned in it, his own independent judgment, if he so desires to do.

## II

It remains for me to convey my sense of gratefulness to those who have helped me with their valuable suggestions and advice, of which I had fully availed myself. But it goes without saying that their association with this work, in varying degrees, does not make any one of them at all responsible for the defects of commission or omission that may be found in it, or for the standpoint adopted by me in dealing with the subject. Four Professors—Mr. W. C. Smith of Ewing Hall, Lahore, and three of the Patna College (Messrs. Kalimuddin Ahmed, Fazlur Rahman, and Dr. Iqbal Husain)—had kindly read through, at one stage or another, the typescript of this book, and offered me several useful suggestions for the improvement of the text. I had carried out many of their suggestions, and the text is undoubtedly all the better for my adoption of them. I have also received valuable assistance from Dr. Iqbal Husain in the work of collecting, and translating into English, the original texts of Iqbal. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Smith for his enthusiastic encouragement of this book. Mr. Smith—who is the author of a remarkable work called *Modern Islam in India*—had kindly sent me, after perusing the text, some instructive notes (called by him “ musings ”) embodying valuable suggestions, which had been fully utilised by me, resulting in considerable improvement of the text. I

can not be sufficiently grateful to him for the interest displayed by him in this work, which owes a great deal to his generous appreciation of my effort at a critical estimate of Iqbal.

Two friends at Allahabad deserve prominent mention, by reason of their close association with this book, namely, Dr. Hafiz Syed, and Dr. Amaranatha Jha—the former long connected with the Allahabad University, and the latter its elected Vice-Chancellor since 1938. Dr. Hafiz Syed—who is a well-known scholar of Urdu and Persian—ungrudgingly co-operated with me ever since the inception of this book. He read more than once the draft of the book, which underwent careful revision in response to his valuable suggestions, resulting thereby in considerable improvement of the text. Dr. Amaranatha Jha, who is a distinguished *savant*, and justly occupies a high place alike in the republic of letters, and also in cultured circles, read through carefully the draft more than once, and brought to bear upon its improvement his rich and rare scholarship and fine taste, which had accrued to the great advantage of this book, and without whose valued co-operation it would not have been as presentable as it now is. He has further enriched this book with a critical appreciation, and has thereby laid me under an additional obligation.

### III

The book owes also much to two valued friends of mine at Hyderabad (Deccan)—Mirza Samiullah Beg (Nawab Yar Jung Bahadur), and Dr. Sir Ahmed Husain, (Nawab Amin Jung Bahadur), K. C. I. E., C. S. I. Nawab Yar Jung was an eminent Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad, for many years, and was, on his retirement from the

Bench, elevated to a higher judicial office as a member of the Privy Council of the State. Subsequently he was appointed a member of the Executive Council of the Nizam's Dominions, and later the representative of His Exalted Highness at the Court of the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, at Nagpur. I have had the privilege of claiming his friendship from a time while he was still practising at the Lucknow Chief Court Bar, as one of the leading Advocates. I am highly indebted to this broadminded scholar, and erudite lawyer, for contributing the long and appreciative Introduction, which, I feel sure, has materially enhanced the importance of this book, and made it worthy of acceptance in cultured circles.

I would also like to place on record my sense of profound gratefulness to my esteemed friend, Dr. Sir Ahmed Husain (Nawab Amin Jung Bahadur), who had been intimately connected with the administration of the Hyderabad State, for more than four decades, as one of the trusted advisers of both His Highness the late Nizam, and the present ruler of the Hyderabad State. At the patriarchal age of eighty-five, he represents the best traditions of Indian culture and scholarship. Deeply versed in the histories and philosophies of Islamic countries, and the literatures of the peoples whose cultural languages are Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, he is also fully conversant with Indian philosophy, and religious thought. He did me the honour to present to me, so far back as 1922, when it first appeared, a copy of his highly suggestive *Notes on Islam*, which precious gift is a cherished possession of mine, and a perusal of which revolutionised my conception of Islam, by drawing pointed attention to the innate catholicism,

and the underlying universalism, of that noble and sublime religion. In fact, it was this stimulating and thought-provoking book which led me to a study of Islam and Islamic literatures, from a fresh angle of vision, some of the results of which are embodied in this book. Nawab Sir Amin Jung's later work on Sufism—called *The Philosophy of Faqirs*—is an equally thought-compelling contribution to cultural literature, and merits, along with his earlier work, a wide appreciation, and a large circulation, in philosophical circles in the East and the West.

This book owes a great deal to the profound scholarship of Nawab Sir Amin Jung Bahadur. He took the trouble to read with minute care, and close attention, every sentence of the draft of this thesis, made most valuable suggestions for its improvement, pointed out mistakes of fact, and frankly stressed what he regarded as unwarranted in the expression of my views. In fact, he brought to bear upon a critical examination of the original draft of this book his profound learning, and exquisite good taste; and, by reason of my adopting almost all his suggestions, the value and utility of the text, as now presented, are, I am satisfied, appreciably increased. Nonetheless, he should not be held responsible for the defects, or the demerits, of the book, for which I alone surrender myself to the judgment of the enlightened public, both in India, and abroad. Above all, Nawab Sir Amin Jung was good enough to write, after a careful perusal of the typescript, a "valedictory communication"—expressing his views freely, candidly, and frankly, on the contentions raised in this work—which is printed at the end, and which will be perused with pleasure and profit by



the reader. I cannot be sufficiently grateful to him for his friendly and sympathetic " essay in criticism ". The Introduction contributed by Nawab Yar Jung, and the " valedictory communication " by Nawab Sir Amin Jung, will furnish readers of this work with what assistance they may require in appreciating the object, plan, and also the angle of vision from which the topics dealt with in it have been surveyed by me. That two such eminent and cultured scholars as Nawab Yar Jung, and Nawab Sir Amin Jung, should have sponsored the book, is a matter to me of gratification and pride, for which I am deeply beholden to them.

#### IV

Last but not least, I would like to say a word in acknowledgment of the very great kindness to me of the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who in the midst of his multifarious duties in various spheres of activities—public and professional—found (or rather made) time to enrich the pages of this work with a short but strikingly critical essay on some of the main contentions raised, and discussed, in it. Nearly half a century's privilege of closest intimacy, and unclouded friendship, with Sir Tej, places me at considerable disadvantage in speaking or writing about him. But it is an acknowledged fact that he is one of the greatest in the group of Indo-Iranian scholars, which was testified to by his recent election, as an Honorary Member of the Iranian Academy at Teheran; while of his mother-tongue, Urdu, there are few Indians who may justly claim to possess a wider grasp, or a keener appreciation of the literature embodied in it, than him. He is also a great—nay, (to quote his own words) " an

ardent admirer" of Iqbal's poetical works in Persian and Urdu. That he should have found something to appreciate in this "critical appraisal" of Iqbal, as a poet and messagist, is what I naturally set high store by. He rightly declares that "there is no reason why Iqbal should escape criticism, provided that the criticism is well founded, and free from malice." Lastly, his declaration that "there is need for more books of this kind—books which present to us unaccustomed points of view, and which provoke independent thought, and not merely stimulate hero-worship"—has emboldened me to present this book to the cultured public in India, and abroad.

If the book be held to possess any merit, the credit for it should go, in no small measure, to those broad-minded and liberal interpreters of Islam, from whose writings I had derived both inspiration and guidance. Prominent among them stands the name of the late Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer Ali, whose *Spirit of Islam* was to me not only an instructive but an inspiring work. I had also derived great benefit from studying the writings of my esteemed friend—the late Mr. Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh—who was a scholarly and a liberal expositor of Islam; and whose works deserve to be better known. I shall not mention individually friends who are fortunately still amongst us, for fear of embarrassing them. But I would like to place on record my deep sense of obligation to all of them for their modernism and the liberal spirit which they had brought to bear upon their interpretation of Islam, and from a perusal of whose writings I had been able to widen my mental horizon, and expand my outlook. I have no doubt that their liberal interpretation of Islam will redound,

in the fulness of time, to the progress of my Muslim fellow-countrymen.

I have no desire to prolong this Preface. Suffice it to say that I share the view expressed by the famous American poet and essayist, James Russell Lowell, when he wrote in the course of an Introduction to one of his poems: "Though Prefaces seem, of late, to have fallen under some reproach, they have at least this advantage that they set us from the gregarious mock-modesty, or cowardice, of that 'we', which shrills feebly throughout modern literature". Accordingly, I have ventured upon this Preface to assure the reader that he is not likely to find in this book the intrusion of "the gregarious mock-modest" word, "we". I have written this book in quest of Truth, from a critical point of view—without taking shelter behind a "we", in a spirit which I would fain hope, may be appreciated by other seekers after Truth. With these prefatory remarks I submit, to the cultured public in India, and outside it also, this thesis which is the result of my many years' labour of love, as a critical tribute to the memory of Iqbal.

7, Elgin Road, Allahabad, }  
1st January, 1947. }

SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA.

## INTRODUCTORY APPRAISALS

### (1) Introduction to Dr. Sinha's "Iqbal".

BY MIRZA YAR JUNG SAMI ULLAH BEG.

(Chief Justice of High Court at Hyderabad, (1918—37); Judicial Member H. E. H. the Nizam's Executive Council (1937—1940); Member Privy Council Nizam's Dominions (1940—42); and Agent to H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar at the Court of the Governor of Central Provinces and Berar, at Nagpora (1943—45).

My old friend, Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, has given me the privilege of writing an Introduction to his book named "Iqbal : the Poet and His Message : A Critical Appraisal". That privilege I exercise with great pleasure. Sir Mohamad Iqbal's position in the literary circle of India has attracted many scholars to write about his life, philosophy, and poetry, and thus a volume of literature has grown up on the subject ; but special value naturally attaches to the opinion of one who studied him at close quarters, and had frequent social contacts with him, observing the inner workings of his heart. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha happened to enjoy this advantage for thirty years (1908-1938). Another condition of a true critic is to be free from all those feelings and prejudices which militate against the value of his opinion. To sift Truth and pure Truth, which is a force of God, and prevails in the long run, should be his guiding passion. Dr. Sinha fulfils this condition also. In the Introductory chapter of his critical appraisal of Iqbal, he gives us a glimpse of the attitudes of his mind with which he approaches the subject. He says :— "neither to praise nor blame uncritically, but to appraise justly, discriminate fairly, prescribe sympathetically, and award firmly, are the functions of criticism. But while

that is so, it is no less true that the critic's duty demands also the unpleasant task of not letting pass counterfeit pastework for diamond, or shoddy to usurp the place of genuine woollens. To do so would be false to oneself as a critic, who must pronounce judgment to the best of one's lights".

The above sound principle of review and criticism has been strictly followed by the author in his critical appraisal of Iqbal. As matters throwing side-lights on the main subject of Iqbal's life, philosophy and religion, and as results of his vast reading, Dr. Sinha has been tempted to discuss some questions of general interest (such as Sufism, its origin in Islam, conception of God in different religions, the alleged connection of snism with the downfall of the Moghul Empire, etc.) These dissertations also can profitably be read by those who feel more interested in these general questions than in the particular individual. These diversions from the main subject really add to the value of the book, where one will find embedded gems of great Truths, and aphorisms selected from works of authors of established reputation. In the course of reading his book when I found that against the name of Prophet Muhammad, Dr. Sinha used the words "on whom he peacs", I was much impressed by the spirit of tolerance flowing from this regard and respect for the feelings of his Muslim readers. Such are the persons who strengthen the bond of unity between Hindus and Muslims. People may differ or agree amongst themselves on questions whether Indians form one or several nations, or whether one or several cultures prevail in India, but which Muslim can disregard a Hindu who approvingly quotes the following verses of Amir Minai in his book :—

جو چشم نور سے آئینہ تو حید کر دے  
 تر سب کچھ تو ہی تھا ہم نہ کچھ اے اردنا تو ہے  
 حقیقت کہول ہی آئینہ رحمت نے درتوں کی  
 نہ تم ہم سے جدا تھا ہم تم سے جدا تھا

I quote the above only by way of illustration, but all through the book, in discussing great problems of religion and life (such as the conception of God, the position of different communities forming one polity, the idea of nationalism, and other questions of similar character), Dr. Sinha rises high to an altitude where one can breathe freely without feeling the damping effects of communalism or bigotry, that so often embitter the old sweet relations of the two great communities of India, that have lived together amicably for centuries. Therefore, as an author, Dr. Sinha is most fitted to write a book on the life and writings of Iqbal, who is looked upon by a large majority of his Muslim countrymen as one of the dearest sons of Mother India, whose name may well be handed down to future generations for the keenness of his poetical genius, and the depth of his philosophical mind.

## II

### *Dr. Sinha's Appraisal of Iqbal*

Dr. Sinha thinks that Iqbal made a mistake in choosing the Persian language as the chief vehicle of his thoughts, and that if he wrote more in Urdu, he would have been understood by a larger section of his countrymen, and have thus been more useful. There is much force in this criticism. But there are many countervailing considerations. I think that Iqbal's case only illustrates what often happens when one's own mother tongue is given a back-seat in University education, or in the literary circles of his own country. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, and even Rahiudra Nath Tagore, acquired fame as writers in a foreign language, under similar influences. If we look into the volume of life-long literary contributions of the learned author of this book--Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha--to English language, and compare the same with his writings in his mother tongue, the same disparity would probably be found to exist for similar reasons. Iqbal was a deep

scholar of Persian language, and hence even his Urdu poetry contains too much of Persian glamour. Iqbal's Urdu poetry lacked the beauty underlying the simplicity of Hali's poetry. Probably Persian rhythm and metre flowed more smoothly in Iqbal's brain. Urdu poetry might not have appealed to him so much. After all it is a question of personal taste. Again, he might have had an ambition to speak to a circle wider than that of India. I add these remarks only by way of explanation why Iqbal thought and wrote in Persian language. In spite of all these considerations it is difficult to dispute the general proposition that an author's mother-tongue has got greater claims upon him for the expression of his thoughts than those of a foreign language; and from this point of view, I agree with Dr. Sinha that the Urdu language deserved greater consideration from Iqbal than he actually bestowed upon it.

It is sometimes remarked that Iqbal would have been more useful as a poet, if he had adapted himself to the varying conditions of Indian society, and devoted his life to the eradication of the many social evils that act as cankers into the roots of Indian society. To a certain extent Iqbal's poetry touches social evils. It is difficult to say how much his natural aptitude and inclination, in this direction, would have permitted him to take practical interest in such activities. It is true that Iqbal did not believe in Western civilisation as the saviour of humanity. In this view he was not an exception. The reasons for this line of thought are becoming stronger and stronger with the growth of passion for war, and butchery of human beings, amongst those who have been reckoned as the torch-bearers of Western civilisation up to the present time. Under this civilisation material interests predominate over spiritual interests of humanity. Iqbal never dabbled in practical politics seriously, and his occasional appearances, or even outbursts, on political platforms, were apparently not due to his inherent liking for it. It appears that when some of his admirers

pushed him into the field of politics, he had to say something. Under these circumstances, he used to express certain political views, but soon after he would resile into his characteristic poetic and philosophic mood.

A question is sometimes raised whether Iqbal was a poet or a philosopher first. A man's philosophy discloses his reality as a man. Poetry is only a method of his expression. As a thinker, Iqbal's views on philosophical subjects kept pace with the advancement of his age. In his old age, he held a strong belief in the philosophy of the Quran Shareef, and for several problems of life, he would turn to this holy book for explanation. His poetry is only a language of his thoughts. Man always comes first, and his language afterwards. From this point of view he was more of a philosopher than of a poet. I shall, therefore, confine my Introduction to those traits of his character which appeal to me, as dealt with by Dr. Sinha in his book.

### III

#### *Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion.*

There are few Indians who combined the culture of the West with that of the East to an extent to which Iqbal did. In the West he sat at the feet of its eminent philosophers, as shown by Dr. Sinha, but he remained equally obsessed with Eastern philosophy. Dr. Sinha discusses this subject most ably, and quotes Iqbal's verses to support his views. Iqbal proclaimed himself to be the disciple of Manlana Jalal-ud-Roomi—the author of Masnavi Shareef in Persian, about whom the poet says :—

میرشد درویشی حکیم پاک زاء  
-در مری در زندگی بر ما کشاد

"The spiritual guide, Roomi, the holy philosopher, opened to us the secret of life and death", and again he expresses his veneration for Roomi, in the following words :—

پیر درویشی عاکرا اکبر کرد



" My preceptor, Roomi, turned my dust into elixir ". Therefore, to know the views of the disciple as to religion, it would be relevant to find out the views of the preceptor. In the Muslim world, Manlana Roomi is recognised to be the foremost exponent of that school of Muslim philosophy which is an interpretation of the Quran Shareef, in consonance with principles acceptable to the most intelligent class of Muslims, educated either in the West or in the East. The *Masnavi Shareef* is believed by Muslims to be another version of the Quran. About this book it is very justly said :—

مثنوی مرادى معنوى  
مسد قرآن در زبان پندوى

" The Masnavi of the intellectual Moulvi, is really the Quran in the Persian language ". The Manlana's own view about his book is

ماز قرآن مغز را اندر خیم  
استفراغ پیش مگان اندر خیم

" I have taken the marrow from the Quran Shareef, and thrown the bone before the dogs to fight it out ". His book really teaches those principles of morality and human conduct which are accepted by every religion, and are unassailable and undying in character. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that Iqbal believes in the Quran Shareef as interpreted by Manlana Jalaluddin Roomi.

The pith and marrow of every religion is its conception of God. Having studied all the volumes of *Masnavi Shareef*, the impression left on my mind as to the Maulana's conception of God is as follows :—Just as the intellect and all the inner faculties of man pervade his body, and rule over it without being part and parcel of it, similarly an intellect, infinite and universal in character, pervades the whole universe, without being a part and parcel of it. Such is apparently the conception of God inferable from the *Masnavi Shareef*. As to the form of worship, Maulana

Roomi apparently does not attach much importance. He would tolerate any form as long as the object of worship is God. This view is expressed, at different places, in the form of stories and parables, through which he always carries his point to the heart of man. For instance, in one of such parables, the Prophet Moses is shown getting angry with an illiterate shepherd boy, who in his extreme love of God is found murmuring that if he could approach God he would oil and comb His hair. Moses reprimands the boy for addressing God as a human being. Under these circumstances the Maulana would make God reprimand Moses himself as follows :—

تو برای وصل کردن آمدی  
 نه برای فصل کردن آمدی  
 آنشبه از عشق در جان برافروز  
 -رب- فکر عبادت را -بر-  
 مرسیا اداب دانا دیگر اند  
 -روخته جان در دانا دیگر اند  
 در درون قبله رسم قبله نیست  
 چنگم از فراس وایا چنقله نیست

1. Thou hast been sent to attach people to God, and not to detach them from Him.
2. Kindle the fire of love in your heart, and burn your desire for worship.
3. Oh : Moses : The ways of the wise are different. Those burning (with love,) and their pains are, different.
4. One who is within the precincts of Kaaba is free from the ceremony of turning his face towards Kaaba. A diver does not care for slippers over his feet.

These verses really mean that the shepherd boy was approaching God in his own way, and Moses had no business to prevent that boy from addressing God according to his own capabilities and ways of thinking. God

was satisfied with the boy's form of worship, as long as he (the boy) admitted the ' Truth ', namely that there was a God who deserved worship.

At another place the Maulana shows the same idea by narrating a story in which people, belonging to different nationalities, who did not understand each other's language, met together. All wanted to purchase grapes, and all expressed the same desire, by using the corresponding word for grapes in their mother tongue. The people, who so happened to meet together, eventually began quarrelling over the question of the thing to be purchased, as they thought that each differed from the other, whereas really they meant the same thing. Now all such parables in the *Masnawi Shareef* give a clue as to the Maulana's idea of religion, and form of worship of God. Once we admit that Iqbal accepted Maulana as his preceptor, he may be presumed to possess some of his preceptor's breadth of view in matters of religion. If, in practice, Iqbal is shown to have deviated from this faith, it may be attributed to the weakness of his will-power than his inward mental vision of God and Religion.

Dr. Sinha quotes the following from Iqbal.

We are not Afghans, nor Turks, nor Tartars;  
Born of a garden we belong to a single bough.  
Discrimination in colour and caste is forbidden to us,  
For we are the blossoms of a single spring .

This again fits in with the teachings of the *Masnawi Shareef*. But then what about the Pan-Islamism of Iqbal? Iqbal had high notions of Islamic fraternity. He probably thought that the solution of the problems of humanity lay in adopting a polity akin to the teachings of pure Islam in which capitalism and autocracy should have no place; in which the King and the poor are on the same level before their creator, God. This appears to be the background of his mentality as to religion. Having once known this

mentality, it is irrelevant to discuss whether he was a Pan-Islamist or not. Possessing a religious bent of mind, Iqbal often tried to expound the principles underlying Islam, and from that point of view, we may regard him a Pan-Islamist, but in doing so, he should not be taken to be a Pan-Islamist of that militant type which some people are prone to ascribe to the holder of that faith. Pan-Islamism is not actually defined anywhere. The spirit of Islam is the sovereignty of one God over this universe, and the equality of all human beings, and if Iqbal ever called himself a Pan-Islamist, he probably meant nothing more than a believer in what Islam really teaches.

#### IV

##### *Iqbal As A Patriot.*

I think that Iqbal's mentality was composed of three elements—1. poetic spirit; 2. philosophic taste; 3. Islamic creed. In his practical life these three components worked with varying proportions and intensity, on different occasions, according to the mood in which he found himself, for the time being. On one occasion when the creed element predominated, he would come out with a verse,

میں ہم وطن ہے سارا جہاں ہمارا

“We are Muslims and the whole world is our home”. Islam in its simplest and naked form is the creed of humanity. No religious man can deny that God is the Lord of the Universe, whom he can easily worship in every part of the world. I think this is the real spirit of such poetic effusions of Iqbal. Again, on another occasion when Iqbal was found obsessed with his philosophy of territorial patriotism, he would compose

میں ہوں ہم وطن ہے ہندوستان ہمارا

“I am an Indian and the whole of India is my home”. When Iqbal says that really he is an Indian, he does so with no militant spirit. When the poetic taste gets the

upper hand he finds charm in every river and hill of India. To Himalaya mountain he would address in the following term :

ترہی ہے سرایا چشم بینا کے لئے

"To the eyes of a man who sees, thou art a vision of God". On such occasions the colour of Iqbal's poetic taste would permeate through the warp and woof of his philosophy, resulting sometimes in contradictions between his poetic utterances and prosaic expression of opinions. If we try to analyse the above three component parts of his character, it becomes very difficult to find the proportion of each in the whole, and even if one tries to fix the proportion, the mentality of the one who undertakes the work may itself play its part in fixing such proportion. All the same, Dr. Sinha's opinions deserve great respect and regard. Iqbal never took a prominent part in the practical political life of this country, or in those philanthropic movements which are ordinarily treated as tests of one's patriotism, unless we treat his contributions to poetic literature as a service to the country, in the same manner as we look upon Tagore contributing to the prestige of India in the eyes of the outside world. There were occasions when his philosophy was probably subordinate to his sense of poetry, and under such circumstances we cannot attach too much importance to his views on philosophy even when couched in poetic verses. Subject to what I have said above, if a question arises of weighing Iqbal's mentalities of patriotism and communalism in scales, I should be inclined to say that the scale representing the former is a bit heavier than the one containing the latter. I think it will be nearer the truth to presume in favour of the good intentions of Iqbal, especially when his philosophy of religion is of the character discussed above.

#### *Sufism and the Moghul Empire*

One of the many interesting subjects discussed in Dr.

Sinha's thesis relates to the connection between sufism and the downfall of the Moghul Empire. On this question also, I agree with the reasoning and conclusions of Dr. Sinha. I do not think that sufism had anything to do with the downfall of the Moghul Empire. The study of Plato also had nothing to do with the fall of Islam as a ruling power. Islam in its purest form flourished during the reign of the first four Kaliphs, who during a short period founded an empire the conception of which amazes the world even to-day. Many of the sayings of the Prophet, and of the four Kaliphs, breathe the spirit of what is now designated as sufism. The rise and fall of nations are regulated by laws, which have little to do with Islam as a religion, and the acceptance of Platonic theories by Muslims could not have been the cause of their downfall as ruling powers.

## V

F

*Some Matters of Special Interest.*

After making these general observations on some of the interesting topics dealt with in Dr. Sinha's book, I shall deal with some chapters which require, in my opinion, detailed reference. Chapter III, relating to the greatness of Iqbal, begins with a learned discourse on the concept of 'greatness', the acid test of which is said to be whether it excites 'love, interest and admiration', the pinnacle being reached only after hard labour and toil. So far as it goes, there can be no gainsaying. 'Love, interest and admiration' are generally concomitants of greatness. However, as far as philosophic conception of greatness is concerned, it seems to me that it implies something above the ordinary. A person exciting this feeling of superiority in the mind of another is regarded as 'great' by the person entertaining this feeling. When we call a man 'great' we, in the inner working of our mind, array him alongside others and, finding him superior to them in certain traits of character, begin designating him as 'great'. Thus the element of the

process of mental comparison plays a leading part in the concept of greatness.

But men vary from each other both subjectively and objectively. Hence there is a great scope for differences of opinion in assessing the greatness of others which eventually becomes relative in character. The question of greatness of Iqbal cannot be free from this general rule. However, humanity, taken as a whole, has agreed upon certain traits of character in every sphere of life to be treated as his virtues in that sphere, and it seems to me that the acid test of a man's greatness will be how far his character or qualifications accord with those agreed virtues in that sphere of life. If the imagination of Iqbal soars above the ordinary in the field of poetry, he will be considered a great poet in the eyes of those who follow his poetic thoughts. Similarly, the greatness of Iqbal as a philosopher will depend upon how far his theories or views about man, God, soul and spirit, accord with Truths as observed and felt by man in this life. Iqbal as a philosopher will stand or fall according to this test. So much as to the criterion of greatness.

In this chapter the learned author proceeds to discuss whether Iqbal's works are to be dealt with as poetry or philosophy, or both combined, and ends it with the remark that he will deal "with Iqbal's works as mainly those of a poet and not a philosopher, *though it is almost impossible to dissociate the two*"; (my italics). It seems to me that in dealing with Iqbal as an Indian poet, it is impossible to ignore the subject of his poetry or inner thoughts as a man. Ideas make a man, and to understand Iqbal even as a poet of India, it sometimes becomes necessary to know him as a man, otherwise there is always a fear of misunderstanding his writings. It is the subject dealt with in the six volumes of the *Masnavi Shar'ef* which has immortalized Jalaluddin Rumi. Thus the subject of Iqbal's poetry is indissolubly

mixed up with his position as a poet. He can be properly understood as a poet only in the background of his mind and his general trend of thoughts. Poetic literary skill discloses merely the mental power to arrange words in a certain order. But the subject of poetry is connected with the personality of the poet as inner man. Poetry is only a reflex before he becomes a poet-philosopher. A poet's character predominates his poetic thoughts. If poetry is visible tree, the poet's mind is invisible sap which gives life to the tree.

If there even arises a question which of the two descriptions—poet-philosopher or philosopher poet—would be much more appropriate, I would be inclined to put Iqbal in the category of 'philosopher-poet', provided his poetry deals with the philosophy of man's life. Iqbal may not have a separate philosophy of his own, but he seems to have gone deep into subjects which come within the category of philosophy. He has given his mind and thoughts to it. He first sits down as a Sufi, or as a disciple of Maulana Rumi, and then goes on putting the garb of poetry on the thoughts which pass over his mind as waves swelling over waves. However, to me the question savours of academic interest only. Iqbal should be taken as a whole. It would be equally true to say that Iqbal possessed a poetic genius which he made use of to disclose or explain his views on philosophy of man and his life. From that point of view, Iqbal may be designated as poet-philosopher. Again, it is always open to the author of a book to confine himself to the particular aspect of a question. Nobody should cavil about it. So far, therefore, as is necessary to understand the philosophy and spirit of Iqbal's poetry, it has been sufficiently dealt with in this most valuable treatise on the subject. As chapter III deals largely with the subject of 'greatness', in general, I may remark that after going through all the references and opinions which my learned friend, Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, has taken



trouble to collect relating to the concept of greatness, I was much struck with the greatness of Dr. Sinha, both in the domain of learning and of critical spirit.

# V

## *Iqbal as 'A Poet of India'.*

Chapter IV deals with Iqbal as 'A poet of India'. It begins with a quotation from Shelley which extols the mind and spirit of a particular poet as the secret of his success. Shelley thinks that it was the poet's mind which 'has made alive the things it wrought on.' He is called by him 'a subtle soul psychologist'. Thus the philosophy of the poet is looked upon as the characteristic feature of his poetry. This apt quotation throws a sidelight on the question discussed in chapter III, viz whether you describe Iqbal as 'a poet of India' or a 'bard of Islam', the nature and character of his philosophy will remain the determining factor of his greatness. The chapter is full of quotations from Iqbal's works which show the breadth of his vision of man's life, his fears and apprehensions about Hindu-Muslim unity, and his own point of view about it. In view of the present situation in India, I think that this part of the chapter alone repays all the trouble which the author has taken in writing the whole book, as it serves to unite these two great communities of India. I think that poetry as an artistic medium of communication of man's thought has also got an object to serve. In the life of man, it must have a mission. All great poets of the world—whether Shakespeare of the West or Jalaluddin Rumi of the East—have made use of their poetical skill and genius to uplift humanity, to uproot the weed that comes to grow in the garden of happy relations of human society. This weed varies in its character from country to country. In India, one of the forms of this weed is the misunderstanding as to the true nature of relationship between its two great communities—Hindus and Muslims. The excerpts made by Dr Sinha from Iqbal's poetry establish quite clearly the poet's services in that field. To that extent Iqbal served a noble cause, the

cause of Truth, and his name will go down to posterity as one of the loving sons of India, just as the name of the author of this book will go down as one culling all those portions from the poetry of Iqbal which throw light upon the inner working of Iqbal's mind. I will request every Hindu and Muslim to bear its implications in mind. Let us all work for unity. In every sphere of life there is much scope for it. This is the lever which has come to raise or lower our position in the society of nations. Blessed are those who weed out seeds of discord. When the future history of India comes to be written, giving the main cause which retarded the progress of India for a long time, it will pass a verdict of 'guilty' on all those who either sowed these seeds or watered them to grow.

## VI

### *Some Pertinent Discussions.*

Then comes the question of the Humanism of Iqbal, dealt with by the author. In this connection much depends upon the meaning which one would give to the word 'Humanism'. The author of the treatise quotes the *Oxford Dictionary* to define it as a 'system concerned with human race'. I do not think that Iqbal ever attempted to write deliberately on 'Humanism' as a subject of philosophy, or posed to put on that garb. Humanism as so defined is a very wide subject, and covers the whole race of mankind. I do not think that Iqbal ever seriously applied himself to this vast subject as a philosopher. He, as far as I know, never attempted to write a regular treatise on philosophy. He possessed certain ideas about God, man and universe, just as many thoughtful people do, and on these ideas he put the garb of poetry. It may also be admitted that the writings of Iqbal do not present a catholic vision of life similar to the one presented by, say, Tom Paine, who declared :—

" The world is my country,  
To do good is my religion,  
All mankind are my brethren " .

Given all this, the absence of such writing does not necessarily detract from Iqbal's position as a man imbued with broad and liberal ideas as to mankind in general, as to the link of brotherhood which binds one man to another, and as to the current of tolerance which ever flows at the bottom of all great religions that have helped to civilize mankind. He professed a religion which preached that even Muhammad (peace be on him) — the founder of the religion — is only a mortal like other human beings (Quran, chapter 41, verse 6, and which judges man only by his good deeds and not by his outward forms of worship (Quran, chapter 2, verse 177). Therefore, Humanism of a true follower of the religion called Islam should embrace a regard for the whole humanity. If Humanism means 'love for humanity as a species of mankind', then Iqbal may have loved man as it is possible for a humanist to do, with special regard to a certain class or group of men whom he considered deserving that regard. It is true that he often selects his heroes from the Semitic lands, for which the reason may be that he found them nearest to him. He drank mainly at the fountain-head of Islam. Naturally the heroes of Islam struck his imagination most as a poet. But when he is placed before the tribunal of Humanism, one of the main tests of the verdict of equally great men in other religions, is whether he ever lost that balance of mind which we expect from a man who not only believes but practises tolerance in the broadest sense of that term. In this connection we have to bear his picture in mind as a man, in general. Therefore, in trying to understand his poetry about Semitic heroes, we must do it in the background of the above consideration. Similarly, in his poetry about nature, he admires the Himalayas and the great Indian rivers which give life and blood to millions of living beings of his country, but this circumstance also may be attributed to geographical reasons, to his being born and bred near them,

and not to any blindness to good or beauty in natural objects that are not close to him. The Spring, the Summer, and the Winter of England first strike the imagination of the English poet, Thompson. The great humanist poets of England, including, Shakespeare, deal mainly with characters whom they observed in their daily life.

The learned author then proceeds to deal with the conception of God in different religions. The truth is that every human being is finite and limited, whereas God is infinite and absolute ; and the finite cannot fully conceive the infinite. Thus a full conception of God is impossible. Yet we have at least this conception that God is infinite, unlimited, and absolute ; and that He is an intelligent force of Truth. This I believe is the spirit of all great religions of the world. As to the catholic and elastic nature of Hindnism in particular, discussed at some length, much depends on the conception of this term. If Hindus mean an Aryan race which migrated to India before the Christian era, designated itself Hindus regardless of caste or creed, which accepted the *Vedanta* alone as its religion and guiding principle of life, then no religion can be more catholic than Hindnism. But if Hindnism means that orthodox, rigid, social order which would treat a certain class of human beings as untouchables, which is divided and subdivided into so many castes and creeds, and which is ridden by so many rules relating to intermarriage and interdining, then Iqbal was right in thinking that if Hindus shake off their caste system and creed they would cease to be Hindus in the ordinary sense of the term. Iqbal would then be in the category of many great men in this world as the following incident giving my personal experience would show. When M. Clemenceau, the late ex-premier of France, came to Hyderabad and was staying at the Residency, he, in reply to my question as to the impressions which he carried about the speed of progress of my country, remarked to the following effect :—

"I cannot understand how can a country advance as a nation whose members cannot inter-dine or intermarry, and where half the human race is kept in seclusion or *purdah*." When I said : "do you not see the speed with which my countrymen are progressing in those social matters?", he retorted by saying "Yes, but the speed is too slow for any rapid advancement".

This is just to show how questions of intermarriage and inter-dining have come to form important elements in the conception of Hinduism entertained by non-Indians, even of such high position and learning as M. Clemenceau. Thus when Iqbal made the remark that Hinduism without caste restrictions ceases to be Hinduism, he was probably thinking in the same strain. However, the discussion is one of mere academic interest. There is no doubt that Hindus, taken as a body, belong to an intelligent class of mankind; and (as the author says) always possessed an extraordinary power of adaptability to the environments in which they were placed, both during the Moghul and British periods. As a matter of fact the rules which govern the capacity of adaptability proceed from those social forces which apply to all equally. In Muslim society, the Quaid-e-Azam of 1947, (Mr. Jinnah) with his clean shaven face, without any knowledge of Persian or Arabic, could not have been accepted as a Muslim leader in 1870. In 1875 Sir Syed Ahmed was first not accepted by Muslims as a leader for his pro-British tendencies. There is a story current about him that when he founded the college at Aligarh, a certain class of orthodox *moulvis*, who would be ridiculed by Muslims of today, began showering abuses on him, and these abuses were so much in demand in the Muslim press of those days that when a Muslim applied to Sir Syed Ahmed to recommend the applicant for some job or service, the advice of Sir Syed Ahmed was to adopt the profession of abusing him (Sir Syed Ahmed) in the press which had become so paying at that time. Within ten years, the

scale was turned. The Muslim community soon adapted itself to the new situation which had arisen, and this adaptation took place in spite of strong political reasons that had created a prejudice against a power that had displaced Muslim rule. However, by 1880, Sir Syed Ahmed became the recognised leader of Muslim community. All the same, it is true that, for many historical reasons, our Hindu brethren adapted themselves to the environments of British rule sooner and more successfully than their Muslim countrymen. In determining this capacity of adaptability so many other extrinsic considerations come in the life of a people, that these differences of time which we find in the process of adaptation have not much value. With all this, nobody can dispute that the Hindus, taken as a body, have been the torch-bearers of Indian civilization and culture from before the Christian era upto the present day, and they have been adapting themselves to varying circumstances.

Chapter XVII deals with Iqbal's popularity. The author has taken pains to explain the reasons of Iqbal's popularity, and finds that its main cause is that his poetry fits in with mass psychology. There is no doubt that a writer or speaker who cajoles mass psychology goes on changing with the change in the masses. This psychology is flimsy and temporary. A popularity based on this will not last long. The length and breadth of Iqbal's popularity will eventually be measured by the extent to which his writings or ideas accord with those undying truths that pervade every phase of human life. That has been the anchor sheet of all great writers and thinkers. The undying popularity of the *Masnawi Shareef* of Jalaluddin Rumi rests upon it. Iqbal cannot be an exception to this rule. If his writings are in harmony with eternal Truths in the widest sense of the term, then they shall ever be praised by humanity. The true critics, even of religion, or of the most cherished notions of human society, command respect and admiration from those whose

minds are capable of seeing Truth. To a truthful man criticism is like a bitter pill which is swallowed gladly in spite of its bitterness, provided it has a healthy effect on his constitution. If criticism of Iqbal's life and writings are truthful they shall be swallowed even by those truthful admirers who find a little distaste in the process of swallowing them. I have not the least doubt that it is this truthful spirit which actuated Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha to write chapter XVII relating to Iqbal's popularity. An honest attempt to sift Truth deserves as much respect and admiration as the statement of Truth itself. One may agree or disagree with the views expressed, and the conclusions arrived at, by Dr. Sinha, in this chapter. But if his attempt to find Truth is unmixed with all that distorts Truth, if he presents facts correctly, if he writes dispassionately, and presents both sides of the picture, in short, if in writing this book he is actuated by the desire to find Truth, then his name will go down to posterity, alongside with Iqbal, as one whom he tried to know and study as poet, and whom he presents in the form in which he found him as a result of close study. A true and sincere friend is often more critical than a lip friend. If Iqbal had been alive, he as a believer in Truth, would have fully appreciated the efforts of his friend Dr. Sinha in this direction. Long may live Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha to carry on his critical work in the field of learning and knowledge making undying Truth as his sole guiding principle.

## VII

### *Hindu-Muslim Unity.*

I may be excused for a little digression from the subject when I proceed to express my views on the Hindu-Muslim problem of my country. I am an optimist. In spite of all the differences and quarrels, which are sometimes relied upon as evidence of their lasting future disunity, I think that the force of self-interest of both the communities will, in the long run, compel them to unite for all practical purposes. In this world 'Truth' always triumphs. It

is a Truth that unless the Hindns and the Muslims of this country learn to live together amicably, and form a solid block against foreign invasions, for which every country should now remain prepared, they shall continue to remain in a subordinate position in the scale of Nations. One of the lessons which the Turkish Delegation taught to the Muslims of India was that international patriotism is a dream, or a hogey, which cannot appeal to those who have been watching the signs of the times.

The forces of territorial patriotism would, in the long run, prove stronger than those of international patriotism. I think that, as in the past, Hindns and Muslims of India did unite to a degree which converted them into one people, for all practical purposes, so in future there are strong forces working which will tend to unite them with greater adhesion. I think that to-day every Muslim country—be it Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia, or Egypt—is working on lines of territorial patriotism. The Muslims of India shall soon realise, if they have not already done so, that the idea of migration beyond the territory of India cannot be entertained. If a proof of its impracticability is required, the collapse of the agitation started by the late Maulanas Shaukat Ali and Mohamad Ali, during the days of the Khilafat, proves the same. The strong moral and political forces working in the world to-day point to the conclusion that India shall become independent, in the proper sense of the word, sooner or later; and the moment that stage is reached, I believe the political angle of vision of all communities, residing in India, will undergo a change which will tend to unite them in all matters of common interest, and bring them on the same platform. In a state of political independence, when the whole burden of the defence of the country will fall upon India, if any foreign nation attempts to jeopardise its independence, is there any sensible Indian, to whatever creed or caste he may belong, who will not be forced by



minds are capable of seeing Truth. To a truthful man criticism is like a bitter pill which is swallowed gladly in spite of its bitterness, provided it has a healthy effect on his constitution. If criticism of Iqbal's life and writings are truthful they shall be swallowed even by those truthful admirers who find a little distaste in the process of swallowing them. I have not the least doubt that it is this truthful spirit which actuated Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha to write chapter XVII relating to Iqbal's popularity. An honest attempt to sift Truth deserves as much respect and admiration as the statement of Truth itself. One may agree or disagree with the views expressed, and the conclusions arrived at, by Dr. Sinha, in this chapter. But if his attempt to find Truth is unmixed with all that distorts Truth, if he presents facts correctly, if he writes dispassionately, and presents both sides of the picture, in short, if in writing this book he is actuated by the desire to find Truth, then his name will go down to posterity, alongside with Iqbal, as one whom he tried to know and study as poet, and whom he presents in the form in which he found him as a result of close study. A true and sincere friend is often more critical than a lip friend. If Iqbal had been alive, he as a believer in Truth, would have fully appreciated the efforts of his friend Dr. Sinha in this direction. Long may live Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha to carry on his critical work in the field of learning and knowledge making undying Truth as his sole guiding principle.

## VII

### *Hindu-Muslim Unity.*

I may be excused for a little digression from the subject when I proceed to express my views on the Hindu-Muslim problem of my country. I am an optimist. In spite of all the differences and quarrels, which are sometimes relied upon as evidence of their lasting future disunity, I think that the force of self-interest of both the communities will, in the long run, compel them to unite for all practical purposes. In this world 'Truth' always triumphs. It

is a Truth that unless the Hindus and the Muslims of this country learn to live together amicably, and form a solid block against foreign invasions, for which every country should now remain prepared, they shall continue to remain in a subordinate position in the scale of Nations. One of the lessons which the Turkish Delegation taught to the Muslims of India was that international patriotism is a dream, or a hodgey, which cannot appeal to those who have been watching the signs of the times.

The forces of territorial patriotism would, in the long run, prove stronger than those of international patriotism. I think that, as in the past, Hindus and Muslims of India did unite to a degree which converted them into one people, for all practical purposes, so in future there are strong forces working which will tend to unite them with greater adhesion. I think that to-day every Muslim country—be it Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia, or Egypt—is working on lines of territorial patriotism. The Muslims of India shall soon realise, if they have not already done so, that the idea of migration beyond the territory of India cannot be entertained. If a proof of its impracticability is required, the collapse of the agitation started by the late Maulanas Shaukat Ali and Mohamad Ali, during the days of the Khilafat, proves the same. The strong moral and political forces working in the world to-day point to the conclusion that India shall become independent, in the proper sense of the word, sooner or later; and the moment that stage is reached, I believe the political angle of vision of all communities, residing in India, will undergo a change which will tend to unite them in all matters of common interest, and bring them on the same platform. In a state of political independence, when the whole burden of the defence of the country will fall upon India, if any foreign nation attempts to jeopardise its independence, is there any sensible Indian, to whatever creed or caste he may belong, who will not be forced by

circumstances to resist such an attack in his own self-interest? Self-interest rules humanity, and the strength of this ruling passion is itself a guarantee of the future union of all communities residing in India. To meet a common enemy they shall be forced to find out ways and means of defeating him. Again, the manner in which the Hindus and Muslims lived in the past for centuries, in Indian villages and big cities, proves the capacity of their adaptation to conditions which came to exist in the past, and the same capacity shall enable them to adapt themselves to conditions which may come to exist in future. What I have read of Iqbal in this thesis leads me to think that if he remained alive, the whole weight of his influence would have been thrown on the side of unity. Holding these views, I think, he was a patriot in his own way, though he may not have come up to that standard of patriotism which inspired men of the type of Dadabhai Naoroji or Gokhale.

I would say in conclusion that this book serves one great purpose. It tends to unite Hindus and Muslims by giving them the true spirit of all religions. It will go down to posterity as an illustration of the generation of Hindus to which Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha belonged. Such were the persons who in their daily lives made no distinction between caste and creed, and who served as bridges through which one community could have communion with another without any difficulty. These are the sons of whom Mother India may well be proud. May Mother India and her sons live long to form one united people. In achieving this goal the spirit of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha's appraisal of Iqbal lends a helping hand.

Mirza Yar Jung Sami Ullah Beg.

## (2) FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DR. SINHA'S "IQBAL".

BY THE RT. HON'BLE SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU, P. C.;  
K. C. S. I. ; D. C. L. (OXON).

Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha has given me the privilege of reading the typescript of his book on Iqbal. I have been attracted to it because I have always been an ardent admirer of Iqbal—the poet and philosopher ; and also because Dr. Sinha himself is a man of unique culture, and qualified, in my opinion, to present Iqbal to the public as he sees him.

That Iqbal was a great poet, a poet who would rank with the greatest that India has produced, I have no doubt. There were several stages in the development of Iqbal as a poet and thinker, and it is perfectly natural that opinions should vary as to when Iqbal was at his greatest height. I have always maintained that it can be no reproach to Iqbal to say that his poetry is suffused with the spirit of Islam, or that there should be constant references in his poetry to Islamic history or religion. It is perfectly natural for a poet to be influenced by the religion in which he was born, and by the culture of the society in which he moved. That is true of some of the greatest poets of all times and of all denominations. I am glad that Dr. Sinha has quoted in his book the illuminating address of Sir Mehdi Yar Jung on Iqbal. There are chapters in the book, for instance, " Iqbal's Philosophical Background " (chapter VI), " Iqbal's Political Background " (chapter VII), " The Literary Value of Iqbal's Urdu Poetry " (chapter XI), and others, which may not command universal assent ; but there is no reason why Iqbal should escape criticism, provided that criticism is well founded, and is free from malice,

In his chapter on " Iqbal's Works and Non-Muslim Readers " Dr. Sinha quotes an extract from "Mr. Akbar Ali's book in which that learned writer refers to Iqbal's songs of patriotism like " Our India ", " The New Temple ", " The National Song of Indian Children ", " Swami Ram-tirthram, " " The Himalayas " and the translation in Urdu verse of ' Gayatri Mantra '. Mr. Akbar Ali refers to the fact that the Non-Muslims' complaint is that the poet has no attachment left for the place of his birth and for Indian nationality. He then says that this impression has not failed to create in the minds of the non-Muslims in India a prejudice against the poet, and with a few honourable exceptions, the non-Muslims do not care to study his works. I personally believe that no Hindu who is interested in Urdu or Persian can afford to ignore Iqbal. It is somewhat unfortunate that, at the present stage of our history, culture and literature should be involved in controversies of a communal character ; but I sincerely believe and trust that that is a passing phase of our national growth, and that when conditions have become more stable, and people are able to take a more dispassionate view of Indian culture, we may be able to assign to Iqbal his proper place, which I venture to predict will be very high in the synthesis of that culture.

One of the most absorbing chapters in Dr. Sinha's book is chapter XXIII on " Iqbal and the Cultural Unity of India ". I entirely agree with Dr. Sinha that the culture which we see in India today is neither purely Hindu nor purely Muslim, but a happy blend or commingling of the two. It is not, however, so easy for me to agree with his criticism that Iqbal's philosophy is neither Indian nor Muslim, as the Quran lends no sanction or support to the theory of a Superman, adapted by Iqbal from Nietzsche. It is true that Iqbal was saturated with Western culture, and that he was steeped in the tradition

of Islam, but I do not think that it is possible to maintain that there was nothing Indian about Iqbal's poetry or philosophy. The view that I take is that he was in the broadest sense of the word Indian in his sentiment and outlook, though his mode of expression was to a very large extent influenced by his Arabic and Persian learning. After all when allowance is made for differences of a theological character or the nuances of creeds, so far as spiritual life of man and his relation to the eternal verities of life are concerned, there are no hard and fast lines that divide the Hindu culture from the Muslim. This is a view, I am aware, which will not readily be accepted at present by the protagonists of denominational cultures. Along with this chapter in Dr. Sinha's book must be read an earlier chapter which deals with "Iqbal's Attitude towards Mysticism or Sufism". The whole chapter is full of interesting matter, and is very thought-provoking, but here again I may venture to express a somewhat different view by saying that in my opinion some of his poems, both in Persian and Urdu, bear ample witness to a spirit of universality appealing to the philosophic mind.

Another chapter in Dr. Sinha's book which calls for attention is the chapter on "Iqbal and Patriotism". Dr. Sinha observes that the trouble with Iqbal was that he misconceived the whole political situation in many of the Muslim countries, both in the light of the history, and, also the trend of present political forces, and gave expression to his misconceived views in his poems. The instances are few in literature when good poets have also been good politicians or *vice versa*. Is every body agreed about Milton's politics, or Swinburne's politics, or some of the recent poets in English? Iqbal's fame in India in generation to come will rest, in my opinion, upon his poetry, literary craftsmanship, and a conscious and persistent

attempt to sublimate the doctrine of Self. Of this I feel sure, but I cannot feel sure whether our successors fifty years hence will look upon Iqbal as the founder of a new school of thought in politics. If they will not look upon him in that light, that will not, in my opinion, detract from his worth as a great thinker and a great poet of the twentieth century.

Some portions of Dr. Sinha's book are not likely to command assent in all quarters, but that does not detract from its great value as the product of a cultured and thoughtful mind of unusual type. I believe there is need for more books of this kind—books which present to us unaccustomed points of view, and which provoke independent thought and not merely stimulate hero-worship. There are portions of it, for instance, the chapters on his Persian Poetry and Philosophy, which are severely critical, and some of Iqbal's indiscriminating admirers will grumble. Nevertheless Dr. Sinha's judgment is fair. I am glad that he has pointed out that even Ghalib's Persian poetry had not received recognition in Persia. I myself had a talk about Ghalib's Persian poetry with Professor Browne, in 1919, and he said to me the same thing as Dr. Sinha had said. He pointed out that only two Indian poets—Khusro and the other Ghani of Kashmir (the latter, to a much smaller extent)—had received some recognition in Persia, but Khusro was born of Persian parents, and so India could not claim much credit for his Persian poetry.

Recently when the Persian Mission came they told me, exactly what Dr. Sinha had written that the Moghals had done great things for India, but they had corrupted the Persian language by making it artificial and stilted. Dr. Sinha is right in pointing out that in his later years Iqbal developed rather a bombastic taste for difficult Persian words and obscure allusions. Nevertheless his reputation as a great poet will endure. Dr. Sinha had referred to

Nazeer of Akbarabad and Arzu of Lucknow. I wish he had referred to Mir and Dard, particularly, as models of Urdu. Ghalib too had shown to what height he could rise in pure Urdu. Altogether, I find Dr. Sinha's book very fascinating. It should not be lost to the public. The sooner it is published the better, for I look upon it as a magnificent performance, and a very fine and splendid book.

Tej Bahadur Sapru.



### (3) A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF DR. SINHA'S "IQBAL".

BY LT. COLONEL DR. AMARANATHA JHA, M. A., D. LITT.,  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal is one of the outstanding figures in the Indian literature of this century. His writings in Urdu and Persian have attained popularity, his lectures on philosophico-religious subjects have been highly praised; and there is no doubt that he had deeply influenced a large number of younger writers and thinkers. An erudite scholar, he used his learning for enriching the Urdu language, although towards the close of his life he preferred to write in the language not of his own country but of Persia. This is to be regretted. Of the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indians who have chosen to write in Persian during the last four centuries, not more than one finds mention in any history of Persian literature. Ghalib, who set such store by his Persian poetry, is unknown in Iran, whereas his compositions in Urdu have placed him in the front rank of those who have written in the modern language of Delhi. It seems, therefore, that for Iqbal too it was an error of judgment to prefer Persian to Urdu. What, ultimately, is his contribution to literature? Has he anything new to say? Has he an attractive way of expressing his thoughts? Are his images and symbols, his vision and ideas new? Is he in any respect an innovator? Does he rank high as a music-maker? Has he any fresh outlook on life? Can he, by reason of his language or his melody, or philosophy, claim a position of pre-eminence among poets and thinkers?

Of his theology or politics, I am not competent to write, nor of his compositions in Persian. His Urdu poems, however, I have read and with much delight. It is regrettable

that detached and disinterested criticism and appreciation of his Urdu work have not so far been attempted. Most of the so-called critical estimates have been indiscriminating enlogies, in the style reminiscent of the *tazkiras* of old. This is not surprising, for most of those who have written about Iqbal either knew him themselves or had fallen under the charm of his personality. Thus the personal element was bound to affect judgment. Was it not a wise man who on the publication of a new book, read an old one ? There was another prudent person who never quoted an author who had not been dead at least a hundred years. So far at least as pure literature is concerned, this delay matters little. All that is of only contemporary interest, all that is merely topical, all that is superfluous and irrelevant, can then be aschawad, and a work can be judged solely on its literary merits. Many best-sellers are hardly heard of after a decade, whereas many works of permanent value which posterity would not be without have for years after publication remained unnoticed. Thus Inexorable Time is a sure judge. Nevertheless, contemporary criticism is of historical interest.

## II

Dr. Sinha's book appears nearly nine years after Iqbal's death ; but it is doubtful if its balance, sobriety, and critical fairness will be much appreciated, as the cult of Iqbal is still not far removed from idolatry. But Dr. Sinha has devoted many years to a study of Iqbal's works. He has read everything written by Iqbal, and almost everything written about Iqbal. I say 'almost everything' advisedly, for not even an omnivorous reader like Dr. Sinha could have come across all newspaper and magazine articles about Iqbal. Dr. Sinha has brought to bear upon this study a vast knowledge of European and Oriental literature, an amazing memory, and the complete freedom

from narrow interests and sympathies, which is the secret of the universal respect which he and his writings enjoy. For over half a century, Dr. Sinha has devoted his hours of leisure to literary pursuits. He has read much and written much. His interests have been many-sided. He had many years of active work in the Legislature—Central and Provincial. For several years he was in charge of the finance of the provinces of Bihar and Orissa. He presided for many years over the destinies of the Patna University. He has edited for nearly five decades a leading magazine. He had busy life as a lawyer. At Allahabad and at Patna he has been the centre of gaiety and conviviality. He has been a welcome guest and a charming host at gatherings not only of contemporaries, but also of those considerably junior to him. But despite his busy social and professional life, his legal and administrative work, his legislative pre-occupations, he has persisted in his love of literature. The production of this monumental book, at the age of seventy-six, is a tribute as much to his vitality as to his devotion to letters.

The parts of Dr. Sinha's book which contain literary criticism (as distinct from a discussion of Iqbal's theology, philosophy, and politics) and which will interest most readers, are chapters V, X, XI, XVI, XVII, and XXI. It has been said that Iqbal started by being the national poet of India, then he became a poet of Islam, and ended as a poet of humanity. Dr. Sinha has demonstrated how beautiful and touching some of his poems on Indian themes are: "Ravi", "Hamara Des", "Ram", "Swami Ram Tirth", "Naya Shivala", "Nanak", "Abre Kohsar", which are notable contributions to Indian poetry; but they all belong to the first part of his career, and may not unjustly be relegated, for all their intrinsic beauty, to the period of his poetic apprenticeship. It is a tribute to his greatness that even in his early years he was capable

of producing such exquisite verses, as have been quoted by Dr. Sinha "On the glow-worm":—

Is it the light of the glow-worm in the garden, or is it a candle burning in the assembly of flowers?

Has a star from the sky come down to the earth, or is it the ray of the moon which is brightening all life?

Has the ambassador of the day come to the kingdom of the night, or a stranger far from his home found honour in a foreign land?

Is it a button which has fallen from the garment of the moon, or a perticle from the raiment of the sun?

It is but a hidden reflection of the Eternal Beauty, which Nature has brought from her close to the gaze of the essembly.

In this little moon of a glow-worm there are both derkness and light. Sometimes it goes into eclipse, and sometimes it emerges from it. The moth is an insect, and so is the glow-worm; but that seeks light, and this is the giver of light itself.

Or the following :

The light of the moon is still, all the branches of trees are motionless.

The songsters of the valley are silent, and so also the green-clad ones of the hills.

Nature has lost consciousness and sleeps in the lap of night.

Silence has cast its spell everywhere ; even Nakir (the angel who watches over the dead) has gone to rest.

The silent caravan of the stars moves on without the tinkling of the bells.

Silent are the hills, the valley, and the river.

Nature is rapt in contemplation.

Oh, my heart : be silent also, and take your sorrow into the recess of your bosom, and rest in sleep.

### III

Whet a pity that the poet who was capable of writing in this strain should have decided practically to abandon

Urdu and write in Persian, which he could use not as a native but as a foreigner ? Professor Browne says: " Persian literature produced in India has not, as a rule, the real Persian flavour, which belongs to the indigenous ". The leader of the Iranian Cultural Mission to India, in 1944, His Excellency Ali Asghar Hikmat, is reported to have said that Iqbal was not known in Iran. How tragic that he chose Persian in preference to Urdu as the vehicle of his maturer and more ambitious poetic compositions. How tragic also that when he did return to Urdu, as in *Bal-e-Jibrael*, he should have abandoned the comparatively chaste and fluent language of *Bange-Dara*, and affected a pedantic and artificial style which is neither good Urdu nor good Persian : One remembers Johnson's criticism of Spencer that in affecting the obsolete he writ no language. Who today writes, or half a century hence will write, in the style of *Bal-e-Jibrael* ? In chapter XI, Dr. Sinha has dispassionately discussed this subject, and demonstrated how unnecessary and even harmful Iqbal's departure from the traditions of Urdu was.

In the sixteenth chapter there is a critical survey of the work of Ghalib, Hali, and Iqbal, and Dr. Sinha arrives at the conclusion that not only in diction, style, and choice of language, but also in the expression of noble ideals, and truly poetic sentiments, Hali is superior to Iqbal. This may seem to be an attempt at " dehunking ", and will in all probability not be agreed to by most of Iqbal's admirers. Indeed, in regard to Hali himself, it may be said that the popularity of his *Musaddas*, and his longer poems, has unjustly led to a neglect of his *ghazals*, in which too he excelled. But Hali's greatness is well revealed in the following lines, as translated by Ward :

" Thou, knowledge, art the key to the storehouse of joy ;  
Thou art a willing fountain of delights and profits ;

Rest in respect of both worlds is under thy shade :

Thou art a means of subsistence bere, and a guide to  
the hereafter.

#### IV

Dr. Sinha discusses Iqbal's place among the great poets with a sure insight into the true elements of literature. It will be difficult to dissent from him when he says :—

Poetry is immortal, precisely to the extent to which it rises above dogma and environment, and touches the heart of every one by reason of the appeal to the human element enshrined in it. All other poetry can be admired and used by a few ; it may even arouse enthusiasm in a few breasts ; it may also serve a temporary need. The pity is that Iqbal, who might have written the poetry of universality, and contributed to " world literature ", allowed himself to write a vast mass of verse in the interest of dogma and propaganda.....If Kalidasa is a great poet, it is because he reads the human heart, depicts human emotions and passions, delineates human character, and describes the beauties of Nature.....The best poetry is ever unobtrusive ; it captivates our senses ; lends grace to our emotions, brings sweetness and gentleness into our lives, and presents to us examples of the cardinal virtues that uplift humanity.....The Florentine Dante, howsoever deeply influenced he might have been by Christianity, has made his *Divine Comedy* last through the ages by reason of its intrinsically characteristic note of universality. Surely, it is not its theology, not its dogma, not even its deeply religious background, but its remarkable catholicity of outlook on the eternal verities of life that has appealed to humanity throughout the centuries.....What ensures Dante's permanent appeal to humanity is the combination of grandeur, pathos, the sense of suffering, and wide human sympathy, and not any special pleading for Christian dogmas.....And Milton ? Puritan, Protestant, Cromwell's supporter—is there in his poems a reminder of all this, or does one not rather forget the circumstances in which he lived and worked, and even causes for which he strove and suffered ? Is not his *Paradise Lost* a grand epic of the whole human species, capable of ministering

to humanity's moral and spiritual needs, wholly irrespective of the Biblical background of its story ?

Dr. Sinha's encyclopaedic learning, his critical faculties, his straightforwardness, and the courage of his convictions, will impress all readers of this book. It will long remain a monument to his industry, his thoroughness, and his desire to state the truth as he sees it. It will be welcomed also by scholars as a most noteworthy addition to critical literature, as it is a penetrating and thoughtful study of Iqbal, and a balanced and critical estimate of his poetry and message.

Amaranatha Jha.

---

# Iqbal : The Poet And His Message.

## CHAPTER I

What is Critical Appraisal ?

Explanatory and Introductory.

گرمی مہی کلام میں لیکن نہ اسقدر

کی بات جس سے اُسے شکایت ضرور کی (غالب)

"While warmth in language be permissible ; yet not to the extent that every one you talk to complains about it "

—Ghalib (the poet).

"For I am nothing, if not critical "

—Shakespeare (*Othello*).

"Blame where you must,

Be candid where you can,

And be each critic

The Good-Natured Man."

—Goldsmith (*The Good-Natured Man*).

"As the Arts advance towards their perfection, the Science of Criticism advances with equal pace".

—Edmund Burke (*On the Sublime and the Beautiful*).

"A wise scepticism is the first attribute of a good critic".

—J. R. Lowell (*Among my Books*).

"It is through criticism that the race has managed to come out of the woods, and lead a civilised life".

—E. L. Godkin (*Problems of Modern Democracy*).

"Criticism is a serious public function ; it shows the race dividing the immortal from the mortal part of the soul".

—George Santayana (*Life and Reason*).

"A critic's watch is five minutes ahead of other people's watches. The critic is only the Secretary of the public, who expresses what many persons are thinking".

—Sainte Beuve (*Giese*).

"The aim of criticism is to distinguish what is essential in the work of a writer. What we ask of him is that he should find out for us more than we can find out for ourselves. It is



the delight of a critic to praise, but praise is scarcely a part of his duty."

—Arthur Symonds (Introduction to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.)

"In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering, innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be awarded with a sheaf."

—Macaulay (*Essay on Milton*)

"The fanaticism of the devout worshipper of genius is proof against all evidence, and all argument. The character of his idol is matter of faith; and the province of faith is not to be invaded by reason. He maintains his credulity with a superstition as boundless, and a zeal as unscrupulous, as can be found in the most ardent partisans of religious and political factions. The most decisive proofs are rejected; the plainest rules are explained away; extensive and important portions of history are completely distorted. The enthusiast misrepresents facts with all the effrontery of an advocate; and all this only in order that some man, who has been in his grave, may have a fairer character than he deserves."

—Macaulay (*Essay on Bacon*).

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."

—John Stuart Mill.

## II

In the course of "A Note on Iqbal" contributed to the first issue, for 1913, of *Indian Art and Letters*, the organ of the India Society, (London) Mr. Saadat Ali Khan wrote that "soon after his (Iqbal's) death, his poetry became the subject of much uncritical admiration by a host of worshipping critics". That is not surprising; nay, it is perhaps natural that funeral tributes, paid in memory of a poet, should not only be generally uncritical, but often

verge on the poetical, and even lapse occasionally into the flamboyant. This is all the more so in India, where the general run of critics think it consistent with propriety, on such occasions, to err on the side of generosity, with the result that as often as not they turn themselves from critics into panegyrists—aye, sometimes even into rhapsodists. The death of the poet, Muhammad Iqbal (in April, 1938) inspired and evoked many glowing encomiums, alike in the press and on the platform. By far the larger number of them were highly eulogistic effusions rather than critical appraisals of the work of the poet; and the encomiasts, who indulged in them, declared that Iqbal was not only a great poet of all-India fame but also of international reputation and recognition, on the same plane as, say, Rabindranath Tagore, whose admirers quote the words of the Dean of Canterbury, that "Tagore spoke across frontiers and ages, and ranked with those who thought and worked for humanity"; of the Most Reverend Dr. Foss Westcott (the then Metropolitan of India) "that there was nothing which belonged to humanity which did not find a sympathetic interest in his (Tagore's) thought"; and also of Sir Stafford Cripps who (recalling a visit to the poet in 1939) characterised him "in the cultural sphere the greatest Indian of our time, and one of the outstanding figures of all times".

The tide that set in, on Iqbal's death, of expressing uncritical appreciation of the poet has not yet ebbed out. In 1944 an Indian scholar (of the Oxford University) made himself responsible for a work on the poet's "Art and Thought", which while claiming that "it represents a critical and objective study of some aspects of Iqbal", embodying "the main contributions Iqbal has made in the realms of thought and literature", naively added, in the same breath, that "enough has been said to indicate that his contributions in both these spheres rank with

those of the greatest in either field". And as if that was not sufficient to establish the writer's claim to a high place among the worshipping critics of Iqbal, he followed it up with the observation that "as remarked by Amir Shakaib Arselao, Iqbal is the greatest thinker produced by the Muslim world during the last thousand years". It is with special reference to statements like these that the reviewer of the book (in the *Times of India*) tersely but justly remarked that "no author is always to be excused a certain amount of enthusiasm for his subject, but uncritical laudation of this character tends to defeat its object". This obvious truth is not yet fully appreciated by the undiscerning admirers of Iqbal.

The reviewer of the same book in the *Statesman* was even more severe. I quote but a few passages from his long review of it :—"Except for some stray magazine essays, most of the literature on Iqbal that has so far appeared is in the nature of funeral orations." This "book is another such oration. Its true character is revealed early where the harangue gets under way with the words : 'Here is a poet and a philosopher who is also a fine prose-writer, a great linguist, a remarkable jurist, a well known lawyer, a leading politician, a front-rank statesman, an esteemed educationist, a respected teacher, and a great art critic. In fact, there is no more versatile, prolific, and gifted genius in history' ". After quoting the above passages from the book the reviewer continues :—"Having mesmerized himself thus, the author is ready to perform the most unbelievable feats of logic. For the appreciation of Iqbal's art the author employs critical tools which belong to the stone age. He seems to be blissfully unconscious of the numerous questions that are begged. The writing of this book has been simplified by facile reasoning. If all that is required of your adjectives is that they should be superlatives, their choice

offers no difficulty; and words like 'music', 'rhythm', 'beauty,' 'grandeur', become freely interchangeable, as they are here. The book is full of reverence for the poet, but the air is so murky with incense vapours that the picture we have of Iqbal is just a heroic-sized smudge".

I shall add nothing to these comments by the reviewers of the two leading and outstanding Anglo-Indian dailies in the country, beyond remarking that they emphasise not so much the faults of the particular book under review, as those of uncritical works in general, and of those relating to Iqbal, in particular. I have reproduced in an Appendix many—though not all—of the passages from the book, in question, (which come under the category of "uncritical laudation"), so that the reader may, on perusing them, be able to feel satisfied that the criticisms by the reviewers of the *Times of India*, and the *Statesman*, were absolutely well-founded. "Uncritical laudation" of Iqbal—to use once again the expression of the *Times of India* reviewer—is even more frequent in writers in Urdu than in English; and it is time, therefore, that an attempt were made to place the study of Iqbal's works on a strictly critical rather than on a merely laudatory basis.

### III .

It is thus relevant and desirable that I should discuss, at the outset, what critical appraisal is, and I have sought to do it in this explanatory and introductory chapter, in which I have also set forth the scope and object of this book, as also the limitations on contemporary criticism. Before adverting, however, to the topics, the first question to decide is whether Iqbal's works are to be dealt with as poetry or philosophy, or both combined. I shall discuss this question first before dealing with any others, as it has exercised the mind of many writers on Iqbal. And well it might; since Iqbal is equally claimed by his admirers—both

discriminating and indiscriminating—to be a poet or a messagist, according to the preference accorded by each writer to Iqbal's works. I shall discuss it in the light of criticisms offered on the subject by competent critics, and then sum up my conclusion.

On this crucial question we have the advantage of the guidance of Professor Sharif (of the Muslim University, at Aligarh), who writes :—"Iqbal is a philosopher and a poet. It is not easy to decide whether he is a poet-philosopher or a philosopher-poet. We have more poetical writings of his than purely philosophical ones, and of his philosophical works which are only two, one is mainly historical, and the other is scholastic in conception and, though exhibiting complete unity of thought, lacks unity of treatment. These facts might lead one to think that he is first a poet and then a philosopher". The same view is expressed, in fewer words, by Dr. M. D. Taseer, in his Introduction to *Aspects of Iqbal*, which is a collection of Iqbal Day Lectures. He writes :—"It is as a poet that Iqbal stands or falls, ultimately". This is, to my mind, a truer estimate of Iqbal than that which would rank him with a metaphysician first and a poet afterwards. In English literature we have a number of great poets whose works are permeated with philosophic conceptions and metaphysical idealogies—to mention but a few of the prominent ones : Wordsworth, Shelley and Browning. But no critic worth the name has on that account treated them as other than poets, or in a separate group or category as poet-philosophers or metaphysicians.

Agreeing, therefore, with the opinions expressed by Professor Sharif and Dr. Taseer, I shall deal, in this book, with Iqbal's works as mainly those of a poet and not a philosopher; though it is almost impossible to dissociate the two. This difficulty is inevitable, for though

Iqbal is a poet, he claims to be, and is also regarded as, a philosophic poet; and it is not fair, therefore, that his works should be appraised without a critical appreciation of the philosophic thought which permeates his poetry, and of which it forms, so to say, the background. For this reason a discussion of Iqbal's philosophic conceptions, and their development, is included in one of the earlier chapters in this book, and the soundness or otherwise of his philosophic theories and conclusions is also discussed in later chapters. But though that is so, these philosophic dissertations and discussions are, in the main, incidental—just so far as is absolutely essential to the appreciation of Iqbal's poetry—and the primary concern of this book is with the works of Iqbal as a poet, and not as a metaphysician. I have thought it best to make this point as clear as possible with a view to disarm the criticism that there is no comprehensive, if not exhaustive, discussion, in this book, of Iqbal's works as a philosopher.

#### IV

The next point to consider is the *raison-d'être* of this book, which attempts to be a critical appraisal of Iqbal's works and achievements as a poet, and of the literary legacy left by him. But that is not sufficiently explicit, for what is a "critical appraisal"? In introducing the subject-matter of his monumental work—*The History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*—the distinguished author, Professor George Saintsbury, wrote as follows:—"It is perhaps always desirable that the readers of a book should have a clear idea of what the writer of it proposes to give them. But if this is the case generally, it must be more specially the case where there is at least some considerable danger of ambiguity". By far the greater part of literature dealing with, or relating to, Iqbal being, in my opinion, laudatory and eulogistic, in the main, it is essential that the reader

should be able to appreciate the idea with which the writer of this book has approached his subject.

Unfortunately, Professor Saintshury's three bulky volumes do not give a clear lead as to what "criticism and literary taste" imply, beyond that conveyed in three short sentences, which I shall quote:—"Criticism busies itself with the goodness or badness, the success or ill success, of literature from the purely literary point of view"; and it "is pretty much the same thing as the reasoned exercise of literary taste—the attempt by examination of literature, to find out what it is that makes literature pleasant and, therefore, good". Again:—"Criticism is the endeavour to find, to know, to love, to recommend, not only the best, but all the good that has been known and thought and written in the world". I understand Professor Saintshury to mean that it is the primary object of criticism to find out whether a literary work is successful, or otherwise, judged from the standpoint of goodness or badness—the test of the "goodness or badness" being whether it "makes literature (that is, the literary work under consideration) pleasant". But what does literature being "pleasant" mean? That obviously requires further consideration.

Turning to another authoritative work—*The Encyclopedia Britannica*—I find "criticism" defined in it as "the art of judging the qualities and values of an aesthetic object, whether in literature or the fine arts. It involves the formation and expression of a judgment on the qualities of anything". The writer of the article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* adds: "What is required above all else, by a critic, is knowledge, tempered with good sense, and combined with breadth of sympathy, and an exquisite delicacy of taste". To insist upon "an exquisite delicacy of taste", as one of the requisite qualifications of a critic is to set up an obviously ideal or impossible standard, as the expression used is not easy to define, and is consequently exquisitely

vague. But it may be accepted as the requisites of a critic that he should possess "knowledge tempered with good sense, and combined with breadth of sympathy".

I shall now turn to another distinguished and qualified authority, the late Rt. Hon'ble Augustine Birrell, famous as the author of more than one excellent collection of literary essays—of which the two best are *Obiter Dicta* and *Res Judicata*—who dealing with the subject of "The Critical Faculty", expressed himself as follows:—"A reviewer of books is a person with views and opinions of his own about life and literature, science and art, which he applies ruthlessly or pleasantly, dogmatically or suggestively, ironically or plainly, as his humour prompts or his method dictates, to books written by somebody else. The two notes of the critic are sympathy and knowledge, which must go hand-in-hand through the fields of criticism. As neither sympathy nor knowledge can be complete, the perfect critic is an impossibility. Knowledge certainly seems to be the very essence of good criticism, and yet judging is more than knowing. Taste, delicacy, discrimination—unless the critic has some of these, he is naught". Assuming that "the perfect critic is an impossibility", none need aspire to be, or to do, the impossible. But in so far as things are either possible or practicable in this work-a-day world, it may be taken for granted that "knowledge tempered with good sense", and sympathy—including in the latter term one or more of such things as "taste, delicacy and discrimination"—applied without prejudice, but also without fear or favour, are essential to criticism worth the name. This is the conclusion which I deduce from the authorities quoted above.

## V

That deduction may further be tested in the light of the observations made by Thomas De Quincey—the famous



nineteenth century essayist—who dealing with the same subject, from a different angle of vision, comes practically to the same conclusion as Professor Saintsbury—though at first sight it seems slightly different. In his essay on Pope, De Quincey divides literature, in the broadest sense, into two distinct classes:—"there is first the literature of *knowledge*, and secondly, the literature of *power*"; and (in the course of his *Letters to a Young Man*) justifies his principle of division by the statement that:—"The true antithesis to knowledge is not *pleasure* but *power*". What De Quincey evidently means is that all books can be grouped under either of two heads: (a) those that merely inform, or impart knowledge—"books which are no books", as Lamb called them—and (b) those that not only entertain but also inspire. In other words, assuming that no book which does not inspire or entertain the reader is a "book" proper, all books come under one or the other of two groups, which I may venture to call, in perhaps more expressive terms, "the literature of information", and "the literature of inspiration", which seem to me better fitted to express the idea sought to be expressed by De Quincey than those coined by him—namely, "the literature of knowledge", and "the literature of power"—since knowledge itself is power. It is what I have called "the literature of inspiration" that Professor Saintsbury evidently desired to convey by the term "pleasant", as applied to literature; that is, literature pleasant enough to rouse our emotions, and thereby give pleasure, instead of merely informing or instructing the mind about "facts"—including possibly that particular type of them which Mr. Gradgrind (of Dickens's *Hard Times*) understood by that term.

Thus interpreted, the discussion can be reduced to the formula that the business of criticism is to discover and lay down the correct criteria for judging of ideas and

methods on which *creative* literature—as opposed merely to *informative* literature—must rest, if it is to rouse our emotions, and inspire our mind and feelings alike. In other words, the function of criticism is “a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world”—to quote the famous dictum of the greatest English critic of the nineteenth century, Matthew Arnold. It is such a criterion, standard, or test, that I have tried to apply to the works of Iqbal, in this critique. How far I have succeeded in my efforts is for the reader of this thesis to judge for himself. To sum up: neither to praise nor blame uncritically, but to appraise justly, discriminate fairly, prescribe sympathetically, and award firmly, are the functions of criticism. But while that is so, it is no less true that the critic's duty demands also the unpleasant task of not allowing counterfeit paste-work to pass muster as diamond, or the shoddy to usurp the place of genuine woollens. To do so would be false to the canons of literary art, and also false to oneself as a critic, who must pronounce judgment to the best of one's lights. Such are, in brief, the salient features of this book, which—with its limitations and imperfections, of which no one is more keenly aware than I am—is now submitted to students of the subject to enable them to survey the works of Iqbal from a fresh angle of vision.

## VI

Above all this book is a plea for toleration of views. So much has been written by many of the undiscerning admirers of Iqbal in language of unlimited extravagance, and so wisely has it been tolerated, that a work expressing frankly but temperately the critical view, and also furnishing ample materials to the reader to form his own judgment independently, on the basis of these materials, may justly claim toleration and fair play at the hands of the reading

public. "Toleration", said Burke, in one of his parliamentary speeches, "is good for all, or it is good for none"; and "all improvement is founded on tolerance", wrote Mr. Bernard Shaw in the preface to his *Saint Joan*. Based on these wise maxims, this book is submitted to the public as "a plea for tolerance" in the field of literary criticism. No problem in present-day India is more crucial, and needs more serious handling, than that of the eradication of intolerance in almost every sphere of activity, not excluding even the domain of literature, with which this book is primarily concerned. Dr. C. F. M. Joad in his brilliant sketch, called *The Story of Indian Civilisation*, brings into prominence the genuine spirit of tolerance that had long prevailed in this country, from early times till lately. To quote but a few passages from his long dissertation on the subject:—"Indian history has been distinguished throughout by a tendency towards toleration. An average Indian takes it instinctively for granted that everybody is entitled to his own point of view. There are, of course, in India rigid barriers of caste, but there is not, as a general rule, dislike of, or disdain for, men of a different religion, culture, or habit from one's own. They (the Indians) are cosmopolitan in outlook, pleasant in behaviour, and open-minded in thought." This correct characterisation of India, and the Indians, is certainly true of the past, and the existence, in flourishing condition, in the country of small, and at one time, foreign, communities (like the Jews in Cochin, and the Parsees in Gujerat), long since thoroughly Indianised, conclusively proves the correctness of Dr. Joad's contention.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there had been in the present century considerable deterioration in this country in the matter of tolerance. It would be easy to cite instances, but it is unnecessary to do so, as we are all in the thick of it, and scarcely any one can escape it; since

it permeates, at present, all our activities. Things in India are now about as bad as in most parts of Europe, of which the famous French savant, Jules Lemaitre, wrote (without exaggerating the situation in the least,) as follows:—“Tolerance is a vastly difficult virtue; for some of us, indeed, more difficult than heroism. Our first impulse, and often our second, is to hate those who do not think as we do. Difference of opinion has in the past led to more trouble and misfortune, than difference of interest”. That is what we, in this country, are now likely to face, in the near future, if we do not grapple with the situation in right earnest, by pleading for tolerance in all spheres of life. I know of no better plea for tolerance than that uttered by my esteemed friend, the late Manlana Mahammad Ali, in the course of his address to the Judge and the Jury, at the Karachi Sessions Court, at which he was tried, in 1931, on a charge of tampering with the loyalty of the Muslim soldiers in the Army. Addressing the Judge and the Jury, the late Manlana delivered himself as follows:—“What is toleration after all? It is this, as a well-known man said: “Sir, I disagree most heartily with every word of what you have said, but I shall fight to the last drop of my blood for your right to say it. That is toleration”. That is to say (as Manlana Muhammad Ali explained), “toleration is required for disagreement, it is required where people are not of the same opinion, where people hold very different views, where they have wide differences; otherwise there is no necessity for toleration.” It is in this very sense that I offer this book to the cultured and enlightened public in India as a plea for toleration of views, on the ground set forth by John Stuart Mill, in the passage which stands as the last motto to this chapter.

## VII

Lastly, the reader would do well to keep constantly in view the inherent drawbacks of contemporary criticism—

howsoever unbiassed it may seek or attempt to be. It should never be forgotten that in Criticism, (as in Science, or Art), there never is, nor can there ever be, any finality. The critic of Literature or Art interprets it just as the scientist does the phenomena around him, in a form that is, firstly, true to him, according to his lights, and, secondly, he expresses his convictions to his own generation. Regarding thus had to the inevitable limitations placed by Time on all human endeavour, no critic of Literature—any more than that of Art or Science—can reasonably claim to speak except to his own generation; and he would be wise not to attempt to anticipate the verdict of posterity, but to leave posterity to form its own independent judgment on the data and facts available to it, in its own good time. In these circumstances, contemporary criticism, with all its serious endeavours to be impartial and free from bias, is bound to be tinged—at any rate, unconsciously—with the inevitable limitations of the age in which it is produced, and from which no worker, in any branch of human activity, can be completely free.

This subjection to the antecedents of the past, and the fetters of the present-day events and incidents, is bound up with life itself; and history proves that even the greatest men, that the world had so far produced, had not been able, in spite of their genius, knowledge, wisdom, or spirituality, to shake themselves free from the influences of the past, and also the effect of their environment. But if, in spite of these obvious limitations on contemporary criticism, I have made an effort at it, it is for the readers of this book to judge for themselves whether I had been able to bring to my task a judicial frame of mind—as free from the limitations the contemporary critic labours under, as is possible in the circumstances of the case. It is for this serious reason that that great *litterateur*, Andrew Lang, (in one of his *Letters to Dead Authors*) wrote of the "dusty and stony

ways of contemporary criticism." It would seem that the difficulties in the way of the litigant, and the lawyer, in the "dusty purlieus of law," are nothing compared with those of an adventurer like myself in the field of contemporary criticism. But on the principle of having loved and lost being better than not having loved at all, it is desirable that a work of "critical appraisal" of a contemporary Indian poet be undertaken—rather than left unattempted. To conclude this Introduction with a "Byronesc"—  
 "What is writ is writ; would it were worthier".

---

## CHAPTER II

### Iqbal's Career, Works and Personality.

اقبال؁ بڑا ابدیشک ہے

من باتوں میں مود لیتا ہے

"Iqbal is a great preacher, who enthral, and fascinates your mind with his talk."

—Iqbal, (*the poet*.)

"The history of the world is but the biography of great men"

—Carlyle (*Heroes and Hero-Worship*).

"Shine, Poet!"

"If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven.

Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,

Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content :—

The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,

And they that from the zenith dart their beams,

(Visible though they be to half the earth.

Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness).

Are yet of no diviner origin,

No purer essence, than the one that burns,

Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge

Of some dark mountain ; or then those which seem

Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,

Among the brenchee of the leafless trees ;

All ere the undying offspring of one Sire :

Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed.

Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content."

—Wordsworth (*Sonnets*).

## II

To be able to appreciate Iqbal's work as a poet, one should keep in mind an outline of his career, as a background. His life of nearly sixty-five years was more or less uneventful. Descended from Kashmiri Brahman ancestors, who had been converted to Islam, he was born

at Sialkot, in the Punjab, on the 22nd February, 1873. He received his early education at the local school. His mother-tongue was thus Punjabi, and not either Urdu (Hindustani), or Persian (now called Iranian)—the two languages in which he composed his poems. After graduating from the Punjab University, in 1897, and taking his M.A. degree in Philosophy, in 1899, he began life as a lecturer in the Oriental College, and also served in the Government College, at Lahore. He then went to Cambridge in 1905—at the age of thirty-two—and took there the Philosophical Tripos, having carried on his studies under the direction of Dr. McTaggart, a distinguished Professor of Philosophy. In 1908, he was called to the English Bar, and on his return home the same year, at the age of thirty-five, he started practice as an Advocate at Lahore. But he never took to law seriously, and failed to make his mark in the profession. In his old age he accepted, in 1935, from the ruler of the State of Bhopal, a pension of Rs. 500 a month, which he enjoyed till his death. The University of Munich, at which he was a research student, conferred on him the degree of Ph.D. for a dissertation, published in 1908, under the title of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. He developed later a philosophy of his own, based on the teachings of Rumi and some modern European philosophers. He died at Lahore, in 1938, at the age of sixty-five.

Iqbal's first important work—*Asrar-i-Khudi* "The Secrets of Self"), composed in Persian, and published at Lahore, in 1915—put his philosophical ideas in a compendious form, and Professor R. A. Nicholson, of Cambridge, translated it into English, the rendering having been issued in 1920. A knighthood was conferred upon Iqbal in 1922, not long after the publication of Dr. Nicholson's book, evidently in recognition of his work as poet. At the celebration of its Golden Jubilee, in 1937, the Allahabad



University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Literature (*honoris causa*). There were published altogether eight collections of Iqbal's Persian verses, including the above mentioned *Asrar-i-Khudi*. The others were: *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* ("The Mysteries of Selflessness")—a continuation of the theme dealt with in the earlier poem; *Payam-i-Mashrik* ("The Message of the East"); *Zahur-i-Ajam* ("The Testament of Iran"); *Musafir* ("The Traveller"); *Pas Che Bayad Kard ai Aqwam Sharq* ("What To Do Then, O Nations of the East"); and *Armughan Hejaz* ("The Gift of Hejaz")—the last containing both Persian and Urdu poems, and published posthumously, in 1938. His two chief collections of poems in Urdu are *Bang-e-Dara* ("The Caravan Bell") and *Bal-e-Jibrael* ("The Wing of Gabriel"); which were published in 1924 and 1935, respectively. His two other Urdu collections, *Zarb-e-Kaleem* ("The Stroke of the Rod of Moses") and *Shikwah* and *Jawab-e-Shikwah* ("Complaint", and "Answer") are not so important as the two collections: *Bang-e-Dara* and *Bal-e-Jibreel*. Thus Iqbal's contribution to Urdu poetical literature is slighter in bulk, and also less important in systematic thought, compared with his writings in Persian. In the former he mainly composed shorter poems, in the latter he wrote longer ones, and expounded in them his philosophy, and indicated his teachings.

### III

Iqbal took some part in provincial politics, having been a member of the Punjab Legislature during the years 1925 to 1928. In 1930 he presided, at Allahabad, over a session of the Muslim League, and in 1931 he attended the second session of the Round Table Conference, in London. In the course of his presidential address, at Allahabad, he expressed himself as follows:—"I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan, amalgamated into a single State.

Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to be the final destiny of the Muslims of North-West India". Referring to his membership of the British-Indian delegation to the second session of the Round Table Conference, held in London, the *Times* wrote in its obituary of Iqbal : "his authority was cited, not without some justification, for a theory of Islamic political solidarity in Northern India, which might conceivably be extended to adjacent Muslim States". This is now known, in Indian political parlance, as the "Pakistan movement". But it did not catch on at that time. A few Punjabi Muslims—with their headquarters in London—professed to be devout believers in Iqbal's political doctrine, which advocated the proposed North-West Muslim State of "Pakistan". But the "Pakistan movement" fell flat then, in spite of Iqbal's advocacy of it.

Iqbal himself did not bring forward his "Pakistan" scheme at the London Round Table Conference. There is, however, a good deal of interesting information about it in that instructive work, called *Inside India*, by the well-known Turkish woman traveller, Halide Edib—in the chapter headed "One Indian Nation or Two Indian Nations". As Mr. Rafceqne Ahmad Zakaria—an interpreter of the poet—wrote of him soon after his death :—"Iqbal was not a politician. Hence there is no wonder if whenever he tried to dabble in politics he proved a hopeless failure. He lived in an age which saw Indian nationalism at its height. Still he could not play any part in that great movement. At the Round Table Conference his was almost a voice in the wilderness. Being out of tune with the modern tendencies, he was more or less 'a square peg in a round hole,' with his reactionary attitude towards the Indian political problem". The

developments of the Pakistan movement, since the death of Iqbal, (on 21st April, 1938) being purely political, I am not concerned with them in this study of the works of the poet. Its only importance to students of Iqbal's writings lies in its offering an explanation of his mentality as a pan-Islamist, and its influence on his poetry, with which I am mainly concerned in this survey.

#### IV.

As in the subsequent chapters I shall deal mainly with the poetry, or the philosophy, of Iqbal, and not so much with his personality, I may as well say something here about his character, based on my knowledge of his life, and temperament during a long period of thirty years (1908-1938), so as to make this chapter complete. Iqbal was one of the greatest intellectual forces that modern India has produced. He possessed the highest culture—both of the East and the West—and was one of Nature's gentlemen. His chief interests in life were intellectual and cultural, rather than political. In fact, politics was to him absolutely uncongenial, and (as pointed out by Dr. Taseer, he was as occasion arose, from time to time, "a severe critic of the policies of the Congress, the Muslim Conference, and the Muslim League". He was also catholic in his tastes and friendships, and I entirely agree with Dr. Taseer that "he was not the bigoted communalist which even some of his so-called admirers make him out to be." In this particular respect, his books do not give, I think, a wholly correct impression of the man himself, who overflowed with the milk of human kindness, and was cheerful, genial, and urbane. If his works happen to convey a contrary impression, it is the fault of his poetry, and not of the poet himself. All those who (like the present writer) knew him well will testify unhesitatingly that religious dogmatism sat lightly on him. Altogether, Iqbal's was a charming personality

which had left an indelible impress on his friends, who will continue to cherish his memory in great affection and high esteem, despite their opinion of the soundness or unsoundness of the philosophy inculcated in his poems, or the estimate of their literary or emotional value.

Before bringing this brief estimate of Iqbal's personality to a close I may refer to a striking characteristic of his, the charm of his conversation, marked by rare humour. Amongst my very large circle of friends, throughout the length and breadth of India, Iqbal was beyond all doubt the most gifted as a brilliant conversationalist. Whether he spoke in English, Urdu, or his mother-tongue, Punjabi, he was equally felicitous in his expressions in informal conversation—in the choice of language, fund of humour, and unpremeditated wit and repartee which, combined with his general good-fellowship, rendered his company joyous and exhilarating. He was also very fond of his mother-tongue, Punjabi, and preferred speaking in it to his relations and friends of the Punjab. A friend, who was present at Iqbal's bedside, on the night previous to his death, had thus recalled the last stage of his life, which merits quotation :—"The poet asked Diwan Ali to sing to him a Punjabi song. The poet's request served as a happy interlude. It proved that the poet was still extremely alive mentally, even four hours before death. Diwan Ali sang a few verses of the mystic poet of the Punjab, Bulleh Shah. These verses seemed to touch a very tender chord of the poet's heart, and tears trickled down his cheeks". This touching episode, so well recorded by the writer, not only confirms my statement about Iqbal's fondness for his mother-tongue, but also raises naturally the important question as to the fate which would have befallen the poet, had he composed his poems in Punjabi, instead of in the foreign idiom of Iran, or in (the acquired tongue for a Punjabi), the Urdu of Upper India. Very probably his

compositions in Punjabi would have revolutionised the literature in that language, and raised it to the highest level. But the subject cannot be pursued with advantage, as Iqbal does not seem to have ever turned his attention to the question of composing verses in his mother-tongue, Punjabi—all his compositions being in Urdu and in Persian. Enough has been said to show that, quite apart from his place in the literary world of India, Iqbal occupied a distinct place of his own in the social, cultural, and the intellectual life of the country during the first half of the twentieth century. His genius was versatile, and he was endowed by Providence with that remarkable gift—of touching nothing that he could not adorn.

I have discussed, as well as I could, both his poetry and thought, at some length, in the pages that follow, in which I have tried to appraise his work and worth as a poet and thinker, from the standpoint of a discriminating critic rather than that of a personal friend. And whatever be the value of my opinions about Iqbal as an author, that can in no way detract from my loving tribute paid here to the memory of one who stood out before his country for three decades as an impressive intellectual force, an effective example of plain living and high thinking, and, above all, a tower of strength to many a great and a good cause. To him, above all others, in contemporary India, I would unhesitatingly apply the words put, by Shakespeare, into the mouth of Antony when speaking of Brutus :—

His life was gentle ; and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world : ' This was a Man '.

Such then was Iqbal's personality. What a man was, or is, is a wholly different thing from what he had, or has, done. The highest human perfection consists not in what a man has done, but in what he himself is, since it is

personality that moves the age even more than poetry, politics, or principles. A man should not, therefore, be solely estimated by what he had done or achieved. Some of the greatest poets were the most unpoetical of all creatures, while much inferior ones had been fascinating by having lived the poetry they could not write. We should, therefore, learn to differentiate between a man and his work. And leaving the latter alone, for the present, I have no hesitation in giving the highest place to Iqbal for that mysterious thing, called personality, which in his case was undefinably fascinating, and ineffably tantalising. Having paid my tribute of esteem and regard to the personality of Iqbal, I shall now address myself to my self-imposed task as a critic, uninfluenced by personal considerations, so far as it may be possible for me to do so.

## CHAPTER III

### The Greatness of Iqbal : Some Testimonies and Comments

" I have touched the highest point of all my greatness,  
And full meridian of my glory."

—Shakespeare (*Henry VIII*).

" Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven ;  
No pyramids set off his memories,  
But the eternal substance of his greatness ".

—Beaumont and Fletcher (*The False One*).

" The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night ".

—Longfellow (*The Ladder of St. Augustine*).

" Look next on Greatness : say where Greatness lies :  
Where but among the heroes and the wise ?"

—Pope (*Essay on Man*).

" So let his name ring through the world,  
Because his soul was great !"

—Sir Francis Doyle (*The Private of the Buffs*).

" No man was ever great without divine inspiration ".

—Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*).

" It is the prerogative of great men to have great defects ".

—La Rochefoucauld (*Maximes*).

" Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration ; and the outward proof of possession of greatness is, that we excite love, interest, and admiration."

—Matthew Arnold (*Culture and Anarchy*).

"Greatness is not absolute; comparison increases it or lessens it. A ship which looms large in the river seems tiny when on the ocean ".

—Seneca (*Epistula ad Lucilium*).

## II

There is a world of wisdom in a philosopher's declaration that "as long as every one is occupied in the search after truth, it matters little if all arrive at different conclusions". But the maxim is very often forgotten in this work-a-day world, and perhaps nowhere so than in the India of to-day. That Truth presents itself to different minds in diverse shapes and forms is now an accepted formula of Modern Psychology; but the more important thing is that all those who are capable of thinking should apply themselves to discover Truth according to their lights. If only it were fully realised that Truth must, in the nature of things, differ in the case of each individual as it presents itself to his mind, there would be much greater tolerance in this world than is the case to-day. In present-day India intolerance reigns supreme in almost all spheres of our activities—the literary sphere not excluded. As well put by that well known scholar—the late Mr. Salahuddin Khanda Bakhsh, in his *Studies Indian and Islamic* :—"We fly at the throats of those who dare to express opinions counter to our traditional notions, our long-maintained beliefs. The slightest departure is resented, reviled, condemned. Must there be no honest doubt in the world, no honest differences of opinion? Uniformity means intellectual death, an end to thought, farewell to freedom of expression. Surely we do not wish to revert to the days when compulsion, in matters of opinion, was the order of the day. Let us show charity towards those who differ from us—even in matters religious—and (try to) convert them by argument". The appraisal of the poetry of Iqbal, and an evaluation of the message enshrined in his poems, is a subject on which opinions are so divided that they have led to some unpleasant controversies between his discerning admirers and indiscriminating votaries. We had better keep in view the fact that though



the number of the latter be fairly large, Iqbal (like other poets of distinction) has, comparatively, a small number of the former, whose views no sensible critic can brush aside, as of no weight or importance.

It would not be practicable to bring together, within the limits of even a long chapter the major part of what had been written by discerning admirers in appreciation of Iqbal's greatness as a poet. But I shall try to illustrate my point by quoting some recent testimonies to the greatness of Iqbal, both as a poet and as the deliverer of a message, especially to the youthful readers of his poems. These will not only establish the point that if Iqbal has numerous indiscriminating votaries, he has also many discerning admirers among scholars and thinkers, who not only appreciate his poems as works of art in literary composition, but also regard him as the bearer of a message of hope. I share that view, to a large extent, though the truth about Iqbal, as it presents itself to my mind, is naturally different, in several respects, from what it does to the minds of other discriminating admirers of the poet.

Having, I hope, removed any misunderstanding of my own attitude in regard to Iqbal and his works—in the last and the present chapters of this book—I shall now quote some testimonies to the greatness of Iqbal (both as a poet, and also as the bearer of a message) from some of those who, by reason of their scholarship and critical acumen, are qualified to be heard respectfully on the subject. The first of these is Prof. M. M. Sharif, of the Muslim University at Aligarh, whose exposition of Iqbal's philosophy I have condensed and summarised, in his own words, in a later chapter, dealing with the philosophic background of the poet's mind. In the course of a communication to me, Prof. Sharif writes about Iqbal, in the following terms:—*'Iqbal's poetry and philosophy are both great. Perhaps his poetry is so because of his philosophy, and his*

philosophy, because of his poetry. In Iqbal philosophy and poetry are indissolubly blended, as they have never been before in any great thinker—not even in Dante". Coming as it does from the pen of an eminent scholar, there is no reason why this testimony should not be accepted as redounding to the credit of Iqbal, though other competent critics and qualified authorities on literature and philosophy will perhaps hesitate to commit themselves to so broad a proposition as the one enunciated by Prof. Sharif, on the greatness of Iqbal, as compared with Dante. This aspect of the problem I have examined and discussed in a later chapter of this book.

### III

I shall now quote another eminent authority on the subject under discussion. The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is justly renowned in the republic of letters, particularly as a distinguished scholar of Persian and Urdu literatures, and has also been for years President of the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu (Hind), the head-quarters of which are now at Delhi. Writing to Dr. Abdul Hoq (the Secretary of the Anjuman), Sir Tej Bahadur expressed himself about Iqbal, in the course of an Urdu letter, the text of which is printed, as an Introduction, to a collection of Urdu essays, written by several scholars, and called *Iqbal*. I shall present, as well as I can, Sir Tej Bahadur's views in an English translation. Wrote Sir Tej: "In my opinion, those who call Iqbal a mere Islamic poet do a great injustice to him, for to say so is to limit the sphere of his influence. No doubt, he has written a great deal on Islamic philosophy, Islamic greatness, and Islamic culture, but nobody has till now limited the influence of Milton by calling him a poet of Christianity, or by designating Kalidas a poet of Hinduism. Men professing religions other than Christianity have not, on account of this aspect of Milton's poetry, diminished their admiration for him. If Iqbal deals

with the great events of Islamic history, or talks about Islamic glories, there is no reason why non-Muslims should not honour him. Does the poem on Spain (in his *Bal-i-Jibrael*) produce an effect on the minds of Muslims only? I would invite your attention to but three verses out of this poem:—

پوشیدہ تھوی خاک میں سجدوں کی نشان ہے  
خاموش اذانیں ہیں تیری یاد سحر میں  
بہر تیری حسرتوں کو ضرورت ہے حنا کی  
باقی ہے ابھی رنگ مہری خون چکر میں  
دیکھا بھی دیکھایا بھی سنایا بھی سنا بھی  
ہے دل کی تسلی نہ نظر میں نہ خبر میں

1. "In thy dust are hidden the signs of prostrations in prayers. In thy morning breeze is wafted silently the call of the *Mauzzin* to prayers.
2. If thy hearties are still in need of the red colour of *hina* (for improving their charms), there are still red corpuscles left in my life blood.
3. I have seen, I have shown, I have heard, and I have made people to listen, that consolation for the human heart cannot be found in what you merely see or hear".

There is much in Sir Tej Bahadur's opinion about Iqbal, as expressed above, with which I wholly agree. Almost all great poets were influenced in their work by the spirit of their religion, or by the interpretation of it, according to their lights; and no criticism of Iqbal can thus be valid on the ground that he is—to quote the words of Sir Tej Bahadur—"a mere Islamic poet". That attitude towards Iqbal would be no more correct than to say of Milton that he was "a mere Christian poet". The true test of the greatness of a poet, I submit, is not whether he is an exponent of his own particular faith, which he had tried to exalt, but whether the spirit of his exposition is 'universal and not parochial; that is, whether he had struck in his

poetry such a note of genuine universalism as would make his appeal also to others, who did not share with him the tenets of his faith. It is judged by this sound critical standard of universalism being the touchstone of golden poetry that a poet, with claims to greatness, should stand or fall. I agree with Sir Tej Bahadur that no poet should be put out of the pale of critical yet respectful consideration on the solitary ground that his poems abounded in references to the civilization, culture, glories, or history, of the people, or peoples, who professed the same religion as the poet himself did. Judged from this standpoint, there is much in Iqbal's works that appeals to me, as it does to many other discerning admirers. But while that is so, I cannot bring myself to agree with his sentimental and indiscriminating votaries; and it is, therefore, that their views also have been discussed by me, at some length, in this book, while giving to Iqbal what is due to him, from my own point of view. It is in the adoption of the critical view-point that this book differs from all others dealing with Iqbal.

#### IV

Having quoted the testimonies of two eminent scholars to the greatness of Iqbal, I would now cite one more authority who is not only a scholar of distinction but also an educationist of renown—Nawab Sir Mehdi Yar Jung Bahadur of Hyderabad (Deccan). Before quoting, however, his views I would like to point out that they bear more upon the question of Iqbal as the declarant of a message to his readers rather than as a poet in the ordinary acceptation of the term. While Professor Sharif and Sir Tej Bahadur emphasise the poetical side of Iqbal's genius, Sir Mehdi stresses those aspects which bear upon the message the poet had delivered to his readers. Speaking on the Iqbal Day Celebration, at Hyderabad (Deccan), in April, 1944, Sir Mehdi—who was Member in charge of Education in His

Exalted Highness the Nizam's Executive Council, and was also for long Vice-Chancellor, and later Pro-Chancellor of the Osmania University—made the following happily-worded observations :—

“ A few years ago, Persia celebrated the thousandth anniversary of Firdausi, her great poet, who wrote the *Shah Nameh*, a famous epic of the struggle of that country with the Arah conquerors. In India, since the ancient Sanskrit poets, Valmiki and Kalidas, and later, perhaps the Hindi poet, Tulsidas, there had been no poets so great or so renowned, as to be known and read outside India, or who had a message to deliver to mankind, until (in quite recent years) two poets arose—one in Bengal, and the other in the Punjab—who climbing to sublime heights, revived the ancient renown of India for poetry. These were Tagore, the ambassador of India to the West, and Iqbal, the sage and philosopher, and the inspirer of youth. To-day we are concerned with the last-named poet.

There is still in India a school of Urdu literary men, which is conservative in the extreme. These people live in the past, and consider any deviation from the conventional style, of a hundred years ago, to be unorthodox and an offence against their conception of poetry. To them the rose and the nightingale, the beloved with her absurdly conventional beauty, and hated rival, and the still more execrated mentor, form almost the sole theme of their Muse. What they admire in poetry is some clever play on words, some verbal conceit, or some piece of gross oriental hyperbole. They are, therefore, surprised and shocked when they come across some giant like Iqbal, who breaks the bonds of convention and sweeps away all those little checks and barriers interposed by orthodox methods of versification, which prevent

poetry from becoming the vehicle of the highest thought, or an incentive to a purer life. Such a giant is Iqbal. No wonder the pigmies decry him, and scream : 'This is not poetry'.

Happily, however, there is much in Iqbal's verse that is poetry of a very high order, and which justifies us in venerating his name. Iqbal's message is addressed to all mankind, and more especially to the rising generation. It is a mistake to think that it only concerns the Muslims, although it is true that much of it is inspired by what is best in the Muslim faith. He exhorts you to a better and more strenuous life, full of high ideals to be attained by abandoning the self : and by faith in the Deity. You are to climb to greater heights, guided by your own conscience, and subordinating yourself to the will of God alone. To know yourself is to realise yourself, and to realise yourself is to attain the truth. It is an inspiring message, a beacon-light, and guidance for all those who read and love the poet. A great poet is a gift of Providence to the nation. He comes to uplift and inspire us. To him we owe not only a wonderful piece of literature, but also a wise and practical philosophy".

## V

I have extracted the full text of Sir Mehdi's instructive address—omitting only a few words of topical reference—because it represents the views of an accomplished, cultured, and enlightened scholar. He justly emphasises what, according to him, are the claims of Iqbal on the readers of his Urdu poems, to which, in particular, Sir Mehdi referred as is clear from the context. While frankly admitting that "it is true that much of it (Iqbal's message) is inspired by what is best in Muslim faith", Sir Mehdi has emphasised what, in his opinion, are those striking features of the poems of Iqbal, which had conducted to

To take but one instance, the world-renowned Masnavi of Maulana Jalal-ud-din Rumi is justly believed to be permeated through and through with "what is best in Muslim faith", and yet his interpretation of Islam had been accepted among all cultured circles these many centuries, since his *Masnavi* was composed, as an almost inspired work which was regarded as "The Quran in Pahlavi", that is, a work occupying in Persian, a position analogous to that of the Quran itself. To illustrate the point : What is the one supreme message of Islam, if not the unity of God-head, and where has that message been more faithfully interpreted, and rendered more acceptable to humanity, in general, than in the *Masnavi* of Rumi ? Dr. Arthur J. Arberry (in his *Introduction to the History of Sufism*) writes : " I do not know of any rendering from the Persian, Fitzgerald's *Omar* included, which has moved me more than those profound yet lovely lines in which (Dr.) Nicholson interprets Rumi's doctrine of the Unity of Being ", which are as follows :—

Poor copies out of heaven's original,  
Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,  
What care although your beauties break and fall,  
When that which gave them life endures for aye ?

Oh, never vex thine heart with idle woes :  
All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,  
All gilded landscapes and brave glistening shows  
Fade—perish, but it is not as we fear.

Whilst far away the living fountains ply:  
Each petty brook goes brimful to the main,  
Since brook nor fountain can for ever die,  
Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain !

What is this fountain, wouldst thou rightly know ?  
The Soul whence issue all created things.  
Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,  
Till silenced are the everlasting springs.

Who is there—of whatsoever faith—whose heart would not be touched by “ what is best in Muslim faith”, as interpreted by Rumi, and embodied in his *Musnavi*, of the beauty of which the English rendering by Dr. Nicholson gives but a faint impression? In the case of a poet of the high reputation of Iqbal, it is not natural to expect that his interpretation of “ what is best in Muslim faith”, should be, in the critic’s judgment, not only accurate and sound, but inspiring as well. It is from this standpoint that I have sought not only to appraise, in this book, the work and worth of Iqbal, but also to bring together a mass of unimpeachable materials on the basis of which the reader can form his own independent judgment, uninfluenced by my views.

## VI

Having quoted the testimonies of Professor Sharif, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Sir Mehdi Yar Jang to the greatness of Iqbal, I would cite one more statement on the same side, of a representative of the younger generation of Indian scholarship, Dr. Ranjee G. Shahani. A Sindhi by birth, he had been educated in Europe, where he has lived for many years. He is a scholar of English and French, and (for aught I know to the contrary) he may also be thoroughly conversant with Persian and Urdu literatures. In November, 1943, Dr. Shahani delivered an address at a meeting of the East India Association, London, on “ Literary Interpreters of India”, under the presidency of Mr. D. L. Murray, Editor of that famous journal—*The Times Literary Supplement*. The address, and the discussions that followed its delivery, were printed in the *Asiatic Review* for January, 1944. It is refreshing to find in Dr. Shahani’s address a very whole-hearted appreciation of Iqbal, and also a frank comparison of his poems with those of Tagore. Speaking first of Tagore, Dr. Shahani said :—“ For me, I confess, Rabindra



Nath Tagore is neither a philosopher, nor a mystic, nor anything else; but simply a grand poet. I do not care for such works of his as *Sadhana*, *Personality*, and *The Religion of Man*. They contain landable sentiments, but nothing more. Nor do I think very much of his political effusions. Tagore had not the fibre of a hero. Often he was tongue-tied by authority. But he was hyper-sensitive as only a Hindu aristocrat can be. Here, too, he was unable to hear the grander harmonies of the Indian spirit; but he caught its melodies all the more successfully. *Gitanjali* and the *Gardener*, though full of tinsel, still reveal in a delightful manner the tender and ethereal side of the folk-soul of India. But it is his love-lyrics, which surpass the nightingale in ecstasy, and in his short-stories, more delicately tinted than the neck of a ring-dove, that lays bare with consummate art, the heart of cultivated India—be it Hindu or Muslim. In brief, he understood the feminine side of our nature better than any else. Of the masculine part in us, with its glee and gloom, he had no notion. It is for this reason that some of us love him, but cannot follow him. He seems to us a storm-tossed sea-bird, crying and flying with no other voice than a cry."

Having expressed his views about Tagore, as quoted above, Dr. Shahani then spoke as follows:—"Iqbal gives us greater satisfaction. We know all about his Islamism. But—and here many mistakes have been made—he was no enemy of the Hindus. On the contrary, he had nothing but respect for them. "How can it be otherwise?" he told me. "I am sprung from the same stock; India is older than Hinduism and Islam, and will remain when we and our creeds have become one with yesterday's seven thousand years". Is this the language of a fanatic? No; Iqbal felt that Islam, in its pure form, had a contribution to make towards the building of New India. What appeals to us, in his poetry, is his fearless way of regarding life and the world.

Wo love his fight with Fate. He rouses the heroic in us. His martial music is very near to us ; it is something that we had always half wished to hear. That Islam is more than a number of Mnslims—rather a state of the soul—was his message to his countrymen. what matters now and ever, he seems to say, is the spirit, the endeavour, the desire and will, to act and achieve. Doing and driving was his ideal ; and it is fast becoming the ideal of young India. His *Hindustan Hamara* ('My India') is a song which even street Arabs sing. Iqbal is more than an interpreter ; he is one of our Prophets".

It would be seen from the quotations made above that Dr. Shahani himself is a prose-poet. His reference to Tagore's short stories as " more delicately tinted than the neck of a ring dove ", and to his love lyrics as " surpassing the nightingale in ecstasy ", are conclusive proofs of his possessing a poetic soul. At the same time, it is quite clear that, on the whole, Dr. Shahani, for his part, would prefer what he would call Iqbal's message to " the heroic in us " to Tagore's exposition of " the feminine side of our nature ", since " of the masculine side in us, with its glee and gloom, he (Tagore) had no notion ". That is the view of a well-known Indian scholar, and it cannot be put aside as that of an incompetent critic. It has to be duly weighed and scrutinized, though it may not be accepted as correct, in the end, by every one. Accordingly, I have taken care to discuss in this book the various aspects of Iqbal's greatness not on my own authority, but of those who by their position in the republic of letters are fully entitled to be heard as well as Dr. Shahani. It will be for the readers of this book, as seekers after truth, to compare the views of the differing critics, to analyse and sift them, and then to accept what may be regarded by them as truth emerging out of such comparison and analysis, since truth must be discovered by every truth-

seeker for himself, according to his lights. But it may be laid down as a safe proposition that Dr. Shahani's more or less extreme views about Tagore and Iqbal are not likely to find much favour among discerning critics of either poet. His opinions about Tagore are not likely to be appreciated, or accepted as sound, in circles devoted to a critical study of that poet's works, while I very much doubt if any discriminating admirer would be disposed to hail Iqbal "as one of our Prophets". At any rate, I have not come across such a statement made about Iqbal, even in the writing of any of his indiscriminating admirers.

As a matter of fact, at the very meeting at which he delivered his address, Dr. Shahani was criticised for his remarks about Tagore by Mr. Murray, the Chairman, himself. Though the latter had introduced the lecturer as "not only a critic and writer of high distinction", but in his concluding remarks he had credited him with possessing "a mind which was always fresh, always original, and always individual", Mr. Murray himself said in the course of his observations, that "he felt that Dr. Shahani had been possibly unjust to Tagore's philosophical work", which, in his (Mr. Murray's) opinion, "was a beautiful and satisfying restatement, and deepening of ideas which had been expressed before, and which the poet-philosopher (Tagore) made his own". Mr. Murray proceeded to expound the view that "it was very difficult to find real originality in philosophical thought", and that "when they had mentioned Plato, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel and Bergson, he (Mr. Murray) wondered if he had not come to the end". Both Dr. Shahani and Mr. Murray agreed, however, that Aurobindo Ghose was an original thinker. Dr. Shahani described him as "a figure of international importance, the core of whose teachings is fraught with tremendous consequences not only for India but for the whole world"; while Mr. Murray "believed

that Aurobindo might well prove to stand in the line of those truly creative philosophers who had given a new thought and a new vision to mankind". It may be recalled that the late Right Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari was a very great admirer of Shri Aurobindo, and used to pay frequent visits to the *ashram* of the Saint, at Pondicherry. A comparative study of the teachings of Iqbal and Aurobindo, from the pen of a duly qualified scholar, would prove highly instructive.

## VII

To hark back to the main point of the discussion, the testimonies quoted already—from Professor Sharif, The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Nawab Sir Mehdi Yar Jung, and Dr. Shahani—can leave no doubt in the mind of an unprejudiced reader of the greatness of Iqbal in the range of Urdu poetical literature. It would also be observed that these discerning admirers of the poet, while agreed about his greatness, emphasise not the same but different facets of it. Other discriminating students of the works of Iqbal will possibly stress upon some other features of his greatness, which are not touched upon in the remarks of the four discerning scholars, whom I have quoted above. It is by no means essential that the greatness of a poet—or, for the matter of that, of any other type of intellectual worker—should make the same or similar appeal to all minds. But while that is so, the broad fact remains that there is a consensus of opinion amongst discerning critics of Iqbal that he attained to heights of Parnassus, which entitle him to a high rank in the realm of Urdu poetry. Starting with this assumption in favour of Iqbal, it is open to a discriminating critic to examine, analyse, sift, and scrutinize the poet's works with a view to assay its value as a contribution to creative or inspirational literature, in general, or philosophic literature, in particular, and also to evaluate it as conducive

to rousing human emotions, in the right direction, or leading them on proper lines. Iqbal himself was not insensible of it, for he wrote in one of his poems, enunciating a truly sound principle :— “ This is the law of God, and this is the mode of Nature, that the one who is going forward on the road of action is the beloved of Nature ”—truly a happy sentiment, happily expressed.

Similarly, in the philosophical writings of Iqbal—which are mostly in Persian—one comes across the sentiments pointedly referred to by Dr. Ranjee Shabaní, in the course of his remarks which I have already quoted. It is not surprising, therefore, that they should appeal to the younger generation, for they inculcate the very useful lesson of action against inaction. I agree with Mr. S. Rahman in the views expressed by him in an article on “ Iqbal's Attitude towards Art ” (printed in the *Literary Circle Annual* for 1942-3 of Ram Sukh Das College, at Ferozpur) to the following effect :—“ Action rather than day-dreaming is the key-note of Iqbal's poetry. Instead of being slaves to fine phrases in a world of sterile fancy, he would ask you to descend to common earth and live poetry, with eyes fixed on that as yet dimly perceived horizon, which the ever-expanding vista of life is unfolding to our expectant gaze. To be perpetually on the road, and never to rest content with any destination, should be the motto of the pilgrim—on the thorny path of life. It is only then that you can rise above trivialities of this mundane existence, and make your life into ‘ one grand sweet song ’ as Iqbal himself did ”. The above is but a correct paraphrase of what Iqbal himself wrote to Dr. Nicholson—the translator of the poet's famous Persian poem, called *Asrar-e Khudí*—when he expressed himself as follows :—“ There can be no complete truth about the Universe for the Universe has not become whole. The process of creation is still going on ; and man too takes his share in it, inasmuch as he helps to bring order into at least a

## CHAPTER IV

### Iqbal as "A Poet of India"

Yet his was individual mind,  
And new created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.  
Thus, an apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive  
The things it wrought on,  
He was a mighty poet—and  
A subtle-soul psychologist ;  
All things he seemed to understand,  
Of old or new.

—Shelley (*Peter Bell The Third*).

### "OUR HINDUSTAN"

By SHAIKH MUHAMMAD IQBAL

In all wide universe,  
Our Ind the fairest far,  
Her nightingales we are,  
And she the rose garden ours.

Although in climes divers,  
Our hearts are yet with her.  
Know we are indeed but there —  
Whither tend these hearts of ours.

The peak that loftiest towers,  
And doth in beavens dwell—  
That is our sentinl,  
'Tis tireless watchman ours.

In her lap a thousand rivers  
They play so light and lovely.  
E'en realms of Paradise envy  
The breath of this garden of ours,

portion of the chaos". Iqbal supplemented the above by writing in the course of an article (in the *New Era* in 1916) : — "The ultimate end of all human activity is life—glorious, powerful, exuberant". That, I suppose, is what Dr. Shahani would call the masculine philosophy of Iqbal, for enunciating which he hailed the poet as a Prophet. Students of modern philosophy would find in much of what Iqbal wrote on this subject the influence of, and inspiration by, the great French philosopher, Bergson ; while those versed in Indian philosophy would easily recall and take us back to the *Bhagwad Geeta* for an exposition of the same ideals and sentiments about man's activities, duties and responsibilities.

Enough, I hope, has been said in this chapter in support of the view of the greatness of Iqbal in the galaxy of Urdu poets, and also of his occupying a high position among those who have utilised their poetry as the medium of a message. But while that proposition may readily be accepted and affirmed, it does not relieve the discriminating critic from subjecting to a searching scrutiny the works of any poet or prose-writer, which may have to be dealt with for the purposes of a "critical appraisal". While expressing, therefore, my appreciation of Iqbal both as a poet and a thinker, I shall subject his works, in the later chapters of this book, to a searching and strict examination from the critical standpoint, with the object of enabling readers to discover such aspects as might otherwise escape attention. Before undertaking such an examination, however, I propose to discuss in the next chapter the position of Iqbal as "a poet of India". After that has been done, I shall proceed to examine the works of Iqbal from the critical standpoint, inspired by the dictum of a very distinguished Scottish philosopher, who said: "If I held Truth in my hand, I should let it go, for the joy of pursuing it is greater than that of finding it".

## CHAPTER IV<sup>X</sup>

### Iqbal as "A Poet of India"

Yet his was individual mind,  
And new created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.  
Thus, an apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive  
The things it wrought on.  
He was a mighty poet—and  
A subtle-soul psychologist ;  
All things he seemed to understand,  
Of old or new.

—Shelley (*Peter Bell The Third*).

### "OUR HINDUSTAN"

By SHAIKH MUHAMMAD IQBAL

In all wide universe,  
Our Ind the fairest far,  
Her nightingales we are,  
And she the rose garden ours.

Although in climes divers,  
Our hearts are yet with her.  
Know we are indeed hut there—  
Whither tend these hearts of ours.

The peak that loftiest towers,  
And doth in heavens dwell—  
That is our sentinel,  
'Tis tireless watchman ours.

In her lap a thousand rivers  
They play so light and lovely.  
E'en realms of Paradise envy  
The breath of this garden of ours,



O Ganga's rolling course,  
 Rememb'rest thou the day,  
 When came on thy shores to stay  
 Full caravan of ours ?

No creed to teach endeavours  
 Each other to hate or strike ;  
 We'r'e Indians all alike—  
 Dear Ind is sweet home ours.

Greece, Egypt, Rome—great powers  
 In story but survive,  
 But the name and fame still thrive  
 Of dear old Ind of ours.

'Tis secret none discovers  
 Why we are as we were,  
 In tides that nothing spare,  
 Though countless foes be ours.  
 'Iqbal, in this world scarce  
 A confidant we have seen.  
 Who knoweth ever the keen  
 And silent pain of ours.

(Translated by Mr. Govind Pai)

## II

One of the controversies raised in connection with Iqbal's poems is whether he can be regarded as "a poet of India" (in the sense that he had composed verses on Indian themes and topics), or whether he is practically "the hard of Islam"—to use an expression frequently applied to him by his indiscriminating admirers. This is a question on which much may perhaps be said on both sides. One of the main objects of this book being to enable the reader to form his own independent conclusion, on the basis of the reliable data brought together in it, the later chapters contain a good deal of material, and also discussion, on this subject. It is but fair that ample data on this subject should be placed before the reader,

in a systematic form, so that on a study of it, and of the subsequent discussions in the later chapters of this book, he may be able to come to definite conclusions of his own, uninfluenced by the views of others. With this object, I shall reproduce in this chapter the full text of an article called "Iqbal and India" (which appeared in April, 1944, in an issue of the *Bombay Chronicle Weekly*) contributed by an anonymous writer signing himself, "An Admirer". It brings together a number of striking passages from Iqbal's earlier collection of Urdu poems (called *Bang-e-Dara*), bearing on the subject under consideration. After reprinting the full text of that article, I shall supplement it with a few other passages, culled from Iqbal's Urdu poems on Indian subjects, and shall then add a few comments with a view to assist the reader in determining the issue. At the end of the book the Urdu originals—of the passages translated by me into English by myself—have been printed to enable the reader to verify for himself the accuracy of the renderings.

### III

The "Admirer's" contribution is as follows :—

"It was, I think, my revered friend, Dewan Babadur, K. M. Jhaveri, who complained, at a gathering held in honour of Dr. Iqbal, some years back, that it was very unfortunate that the poet had written very little on India, or on matters concerning India. But this is not a correct estimation of realities. Such an opinion is invariably held by all persons who have had no occasion to study his works in the original Urdu and Persian, or whose knowledge of the poet is confined only to his stray poems, including the well-known song—*Sare Jahan se Achha Hindustan Hamara*. It may be noted that Iqbal was an ardent Indian, and that he constantly kept in his vision his country of birth, for which he maintained a great regard and affection throughout his earthly life. Iqbal started writing

in Urdu and not in Persian, which language he purposely adopted as a vehicle of his thoughts in later life out of sheer necessity, since he wanted that his message should reach the entire world of Islam. In the beginning of his poetic career he had written much on purely Indian subjects. His lengthy poem on the Himalayas, for instance, is one of the best descriptive poems ever written by any poet in any language. In it he compares this vast mountain-range with Mount Sinai, which is held in extreme veneration by the Jews, the Christians, and the Mussalmans, and then writes :—

That mountain was only the scene of a temporary  
manifestation to Moses who conversed with God  
But thou art an illumination throughout for every  
observing eye.

Other poems belonging to this age are the *Ravi*, the *Moon*, the *Sun*, the *Child*, etc. But the most inspiring of all is *Hamara Des* (our country) or *Taraana-e-Hindi* (National Anthem of India). Some of the outstanding verses are given below :—

‘ Our India is the best in the whole world ;  
We are its *nightingales* while it is our garden.  
That highest mountain, a neighbour to the sky,  
Is our sentry and is our protector.  
Thousands of streams nestle in its lap,  
Due to which our garden has become a rival unto  
paradise.  
Religion does not teach people to bear enmity to one  
another ;  
We are Indians and India is our motherland.  
Greece and Egypt and Rome—all have been obliterated  
from the world.  
But our name and mark are still there.  
There is a reason why our existence is not wiped out,  
Though the revolutions of time have been inimical  
to us for centuries together.’

This is the poem which established Iqbal's reputation as a patriotic poet, and this is the poem which became a household word throughout India, wherever Urdu is spoken or understood. It was about this time that Iqbal wrote two or three other poems on typically Indian subjects. The first poem is entitled *Ram*, and is in praise of one who was born to destroy the embodiment of evil, the Ravana of his age. The poem must in fact be regarded as a Muslim's tribute to the noble qualities possessed by Ram. This is what the poet writes of him :—

'The cup of India is brimful with the wine of truth,  
All the western philosophers acknowledge India's  
superiority.

This is the result of the sky-reaching thoughts of the  
Indians,

That the terrace of India has out-done the sky in  
height.

There have been in this land thousands of persons  
with angelic disposition,

It is they who have exalted the name of India  
throughout the world.

India is proud of the existence of Ram ;

Those gifted with insight regard him as the Imam  
of India.

The miracle wrought by this Lamp of Guidance is

That India's evening is brighter than the morning  
in this age,

He was an adept in the art of wielding the sword  
and was unrivalled in bravery,

He was without a second in piety and was an  
embodiment of love.

The second remarkable poem belonging to this period is in praise of Swami Ram Tirth, who, as is well-known, deliberately sought union with the Infinite by drowning himself into a river. Iqbal then wrote the following

beautiful elegy giving vent to his philosophy of life and death at the same time :—

O wonderful drop, thou art now in the lap of the  
river,

At first thou wast a pearl, but now thou hast become  
an unique pearl

Ah, in what a beautiful way thou hast disclosed the  
secret of colour and smell !

I am, however, still a slave to such distinctions of  
colour and smell !

After the hue and cry of life has ceased, it has developed  
into a tumult of the Day of Judgment,

This spark has, after it is extinguished, become the  
fire-temple of Azar.

The negation of existence is only a blandishment of  
God-conscious heart,

The pearl of ' Illallah ' (except God) is hidden in the river  
of ' la ' (there is no God).

The Abraham of love breaks the idol of existence.

As if the intoxication of the fountain of love is a  
remedy for bringing a person into consciousness.

The significance of end is hidden from the blind eye.

The moment the flutter (of liquidity) disappears,  
mercury (quicksilver) is nothing but raw silver.'

The third poem is the most remarkable out of the three poems alluded to above. It is entitled *Naya Shivala* ("New Temple") and was written at a time when the relations between the Hindus and the Musalmans were most unhappy. The poem is a living proof of the fact that Iqbal was an ardent supporter of unity between the Hindus and Musalmans. The poem is so beautiful that I offer no apology for reproducing it in full. It will be

found that Iqbal's solution of the problem is as original as it is feasible. Says he :—

May I tell the truth, O Brahmin, provided thou shouldst not get offended ?

The idols in thy idol-temple have all become antiquated.

Thou hast learnt from the idols to bear enmity towards thy own kith and kin ;

The Waiz has also learnt from his God how to wrangle with others.

Having become sick at heart I have left both the temple and the mosque ;

I have stopped listening to the preachings of the Waiz and also to thy fables.

Thou art the gardener of the orchard ; and hence thou shouldst attend to these dissensions ;

This poisonous wind has destroyed all the plants.

Thou thinkest that God exists in these idols of stone ;

But to me every particle of my country's dust is as holy as an idol.

Come, let us lift up together the veils of strangeness once again,

Let us reconcile the separated ones once again and erase marks of dualism.

The heart's abode is lying desolate for a long time past,

Come and let us build a new temple in this land.

Let our holy temple be the highest among the world's holy places.

Let us raise its spire so high as to touch the sky !

There ought to be an incomparable image of gold.

Which we should set up in this Hardwar of the Heart.

Its appearance should be beautiful, and its form attractive,

We should then ask that idol to fulfil all our heart's desires.

There ought to be a sacred thread round about the neck,  
and a rosary in the hands,

In other words, we should show the splendour of the  
Kaabe in this idol-temple.

The heart should be rent asunder so that all may have  
a 'darshan' of the same ;

So that each soul may be practically set ablaze.

Taking water from the Ganges of eyes,

We should make flow a stream in front of this idol.

We should inscribe 'Indie' on the forehead of that  
idol,

So that the world may hear once again the old forgotten  
songs,

Let us chant every morning sweet and melodious  
*mantras*,

And make all the devotees drink the wine of love !

Let us conceal the sound of the bell in the *muezzin's*  
call to prayers.

When summoning the congregation to Divine  
worship !

Love is fire which is free from all qualities,

Come and let us consign all religious disensions to  
that fire.

It is the custom of the lovers to sacrifice the body and  
the soul,

To weep, to suffer afflictions and yet to love the same.

There is strength and peace in the songs of devotion ;

The salvation of the people of the world lies in love.

As hinted in the beginning of this article, Iqbal  
cherished feelings of love and reverence for his country.  
In his inimitable style he describes his country thus :—

The land where Chishti delivered his message of truth,

The garden where Nanak recited his celestial songs,

The land which was adopted by the Turks as their mother-country.

The land for the sake of which the people of the Hejaz migrated from Arabia,

The same is my country, the same is my country ' !

The land which filled the hearts of the Greeks with astonishment,

The land which taught sciences and arts to the whole world,

The land whose dust possessed the qualities of gold,

The land which filled the skirts of the Turks with jewels,

The same is my country, the same is my country.

Iqbal was a great respecter of all leaders of religious thought, as can be seen from his poem on Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. The first two couplets are as follows :—

The nation did not care a bit for the message of the Gautama,

It did not recognise the work of its own priceless jewel.

Alas, the fortunate remained ignorant of the voice of truth ;

A tree is always careless about the sweetness of its own fruits,

The next couplets deal with the condition of the Shudras in this country, and they also refer to the fact that the Brahmin is still intoxicated with the wine of pride. The last couplet is reproduced below :—

Once again the voice of Divine Unity was raised aloft from the Puojab

India was awakened from her slumbers by a perfect Man.

The above couplets are a living testimony of Iqbal's respect for leaders of other communities ; they also show



that he was accommodating and tolerant towards persons holding different faiths. It may, however, be mentioned that Iqbal was in no sense a believer in narrow nationalism, or patriotism which is confined to one's love for one's own nation and country. His love for peoples of different climes and countries knew no distinctions of caste, creed or colour. He believed that it was the narrow conception of patriotism that was responsible for all strifes and wars in the world, and thought that it was an insult to Divine Unity that humanity should be divided into so many sections or tribes or nations. In spite of this he felt extremely grieved when he found that his own land of birth was a victim to all sorts of communal discords and dissensions and, like a true patriot as he was; he warned the Indians of dangers of disunity in the following powerful lines :—

O fool, take care of the country, since calamitous  
days are lying ahead,

Intrigues are afoot in the skies regarding thy annihilation.

See what is taking place, and what is yet to happen ;

What after all, is there in the tales about the old days ?

Such a change has overtaken this assembly of existence

That it is one of the signals of ruination to remain  
quiet,

If you, O Indians, do not understand all this, you are  
sure to be annihilated

Your story will also be not found in the book of stories.

To-day I shall certainly make bare my hidden wounds,

By shedding tears of blood, I shall turn the assembly  
into a garden.

O India, I shall teach the lesson of fidelity to one and all,

For I am determined to sacrifice even my life at thy  
altar.

If it is difficult to string these scattered beads into a rosary

I shall see that this difficulty is also removed.

Communalism is a tree of which the fruit is bigotry,  
This is the fruit which turned out Adam, from Paradise.  
Freedom lies hidden in love if thou understandest it aright

Slavery is another name for being a prisoner to the distinctions of thee and thou.

Do not neglect thy own kith and kin ; thy salvation lies in it

If, O careless man, thou wants to live in this world.  
Love of mankind is the soul-nourishing wine,  
And it has taught me to remain intoxicated without the cup and the wine.

Ailing nations have recovered from their ailments through love,

Nations have awakened from their sleeping destiny through love.

The distinctions of caste and creed have annihilated nations

Do my countrymen really cherish any good-will for their own country ?

Time came when Iqbal got disgusted with the communal strife as prevailing in this country ; and it was then that he wrote a poem entitled the *Voice of Anguish* in which he expressed a wish to leave this country for good. Fortunately for India, his wish did not materialize, and he remained in India. Says he :—

O desert of Central Asia, call me back again ;  
Alas, it is no longer possible for me to stay amidst this habitation,  
O boat of the wave of the Indus, take me over to the other side of the stream,  
Yes adieu to thee O birth-place of Gautama,  
Thy atmosphere does not agree with me any more,  
Adieu, O land of sweet-tongued Nanak.

Good-bye, O resting place of Christ-like Chishti  
 Adieu, O land which has been the visiting-place of the  
     Shaikh of Shiraz,  
 Adieu, O land of subtle Valmik, adieu !  
 Thy soil is extremely discord-creating ;  
 What to talk of unity, here the very nearness is the  
     cause of disunity.  
 My countrymen have forgotten the secret of love,  
 That is why they are not suited for the battle-field of  
     existence.  
 Instead of oneness, the separation is extremely galling.  
 O, the separation amongst the grains of the heap is  
     extremely deplorable.  
 The day about which I was so fearful, is near at hand,  
 Our name is about to be obliterated from the page of  
     existence.

Whatever excerpts have been reproduced above — and they can still be multiplied — have all been culled from Iqbal's one book of poems only, viz. *Bang-e-Dara*. His other works, both Persian and Urdu, also contain lines here and there about the various problems confronting India ; like the removal of untouchability, attainment of *swaraj*, conflict between capital and labour, evils of political slavery, etc. But such references became less frequent as Iqbal started writing for Islamic countries, and then for the whole of humanity. Iqbal, it may be remembered, made his debut as a national poet of India, and by and by he assumed the role of a poet of Islam, and ultimately ended as a poet of humanity. The crowning glory of Iqbal's life was the love that he cherished for all the nations of the world. To him it was nothing short of a crusade to break down all the barriers that unfortunately divide humanity even to this day. His aim was to knit up all the nations into one huge family, and upto the end he directed his energies towards the attainment of that goal."

## IV

I shall now supplement the passages quoted by "Admirer" from Iqbal's Urdu poems, with some others called by me on subjects relating to India. My first choice will be the following passages from the poem on the Himalayas, which "Admirer" had already quoted from :—

O Himalayas! rampart of the Indian realm! The heavens stoop to kiss thy brow. The ages come and go, but thou art eternally young. Thou seemest outwardly a range of mountains, but in fact thou art our protector, and foremost defensive wall for India. The snow has put the crown of glory on thine head, which smiles at the world-illuminating Sun. For Moses at Sinai there was but one vision; while thou art a panorama of visions. The rivulet comes down from the mountain heights singing, and puts Kausar and Tasnim to shame; holding as it were, a mirror to Nature, sometimes deflecting itself from the stones on its way, and sometimes striking against them.

Even in translation the above passages retain, to some extent, the beauty of the original, and bring into relief the grandeur, the stupendousness, and the majesty of the highest mountainous range in the world. Again, I would quote a passage depicting an evening scene in the Himalayas :—

When Laila of the night comes dishevelled her curling locks, the heart is attracted by the sound of the streams.

The stillness of the evening on which the power of expression sacrifices itself, and the spell of meditation which is cast over all the trees capture your heart.

How beautifully the crimson glow of the evening spreads trembling over the mountain; and this rose-tinted rouge looks splendid on its face.

These verses, even in their foreign garb, are likely to appeal to readers as manifesting a true poetic instinct.

They also prove that Iqbal had a poet's eye for appreciating the beauty of Nature, and also a capacity for giving expression to his vision in poetic language. I shall now quote some passages from a poem called *Abre Kohsar* (or "The Cloud") which also will interest admirers of beauty in Nature :—

I cover the face of existence like a lock of hair,  
I become arrayed with the gust of violent wind.  
From a distance I make the hopeful eye wistful when  
I silently pass by some habitation ; while  
Walted about when I come to the side of a river.  
I adorn the channel with rings of ripples.  
I am the hope of the blossoming plant of the field ;  
I am born of the sea and reared by the sun.  
I have given to the streams of the mountains.  
The tumult of ocean, and made the birds to forget them-  
selves in music.

Standing at the head I have made the grass  
To rise from death, and to the buds I give delightful  
smile.

The huts of the peasants, by the side of the hill,  
Are through my bounty, the models of bed chambers.

Here, again, the striking beauty of the original is perceptible even in translation, and will be appreciated by readers. Yet, another group of passages may be quoted from a poem about the glow-worm, which are marked by great beauty :—

Is it the light of the glow-worm in the garden, or is it  
a candle burning in the assembly of the flowers ?  
Has a star from the sky come down to the earth, or is it  
the ray of the moon which is brightening all life ?  
Or has the ambassador of the day come into the kingdom  
of the night, or the unknown man away from his  
home-land received honour in a foreign country ?  
Is it a button which has fallen off the coat of the moon,  
or is it a particle from the garment of the sun ?

It is but a hidden reflection of the eternal Beauty, which  
Nature has brought from its closet to the gaze of the  
assembly

In this little moon (of a glow-worm) there are both  
darkness and light.

Sometimes it goes into the eclipse, and sometimes it  
comes out of it.

The moth is an insect, the glow-worm is also an insect  
but

That one is the seeker of light, and this one is the giver  
of light itself.

This poem on the glow-worm is a gem in itself. I do  
not know, in Urdu poetry, a more happily-worded and  
strikingly picturesque delineation of the glow-worm than  
that painted by Iqbal. Again, the spirit of a peace, rest,  
and meditation induced by the calm and stillness of the  
greatest mountain range in the world is vividly set forth  
in the following verses :—

The light of the moon is still, the branches of every  
tree are motionless.

The singers of the valley are silent, and so are the green-  
clad ones of the mountain,

Nature has become unconscious, and is sleeping in the  
lap of night.

Silence has cast such a spell all over, that even the  
angel, Nakir (who is to ask questions of the newly-  
buried dead in the grave) has gone to rest,

The silent caravan of the stars is moving without the  
bells.

Silent are the mountains, the valley and the river.

Nature seems to be in contemplation.

O my heart! be silent now. Take your sorrow into your  
bosom, and go to sleep.

## V

“Admirer’s” essay — which I have reproduced in full,  
with a grateful appreciation of the anonymous writer’s

survey of Iqbal as a "poet of India" — is, on the whole a fair and reasoned estimate. Its perusal — with that of the supplementary passages quoted and translated by me — should carry conviction to the minds of those who have persuaded themselves into the belief (due mainly, I suppose, to their unfamiliarity with Iqbal's earlier Urdu works) that the poet wrote almost entirely on Islamic subjects to the practical exclusion of Indian themes. I agree with "Admirer" that there is more of Iqbal's poems on Indian topics than he has quoted in his essay, which I have tried to supplement by reproducing some more extracts, in English renderings. But even when all such passages have been brought together, for a fair and impartial survey of Iqbal's work as a "poet of India", the fact remains — and it has to be frankly admitted — that they constitute a comparatively small portion of the poet's Urdu works. The vast bulk of Iqbal's poetical works are in Persian, and it may be safely asserted that except perhaps for an occasional reference — the most notable of which records the poet's reflections when sitting in the Nisbat Bagh at Srinagar (in Kashmir) — India is conspicuous by its absence in them. As regards Indian poems in Iqbal's poetical works in Urdu (outside the one earlier collection — called *Bang-e-Dara* — from which the above extracts have been made) it is admitted by "Admirer" that "his (Iqbal's) other works, both Persian and Urdu, also contain lines, here and there, about the various problems confronting India". So that the fact is undeniable, as perhaps also its cause (as assigned by the same writer) that it was because "by and by, he (Iqbal) assumed the role of a poet of Islam, and ultimately ended as a poet of humanity". All these different stages of Iqbal's work, as a poet, are discussed in this book — his work as "a poet of India" in this chapter, and his work as "a poet of Islam", and also as "a poet of humanity", in the later chapters.

## CHAPTER V

### Iqbal's Religious Background

Children of men ! the unseen Power, whose eye  
Forever doth accompany mankind,  
Hath look'd on no religion scornfully  
That men did ever find.

—Matthew Arnold (*Progress*).

The greatest vicissitude of things amongst men is the vicissitude of sects and religions.

—Francis Bacon (*Essay on Vicissitudo of Things*).

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

—Swift (*Thoughts on Various Subjects*).

All religions must be tolerated, for every man must get to heaven his own way.

—Frederick the Great's Note (On Report Concerning Roman Catholic Schools").

Sensible men, and conscientious men, all over the world were of one religion, which is the relation of soul to God, and is destroyed by bigotry.

—Emerson (*Lectures and Biographical Sketches*)

I never told my own religion, nor scrutinised that of another. I never attempted to make a convert, nor wished to change another's creed. I have over judged of other's religion by their lives, for it is from our lives, and not from our words, that our religion must be read.

—Thomas Jefferson (*Writings* : Vol. XV).

We cannot make a religion for others, and we ought not to let others make a religion for us. It is impossible to believe that the grace of God is distributed denominationally.

—Dean W. R. Inge (*Bit and Wisdom of Dean Inge*).

Religion is not a dogma, nor an emotion but a service.

—R. D. Hitchcock (*Clerval Atoms*)



There is only one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it.

—Bernard Shaw (*Plays : Pleasant and Unpleasant*).

Men will wrangle for religion ; write for it ; fight for it ; die for it ; anything but live for it.

—C. C. Colton (*Locon ; Reflections*).

Difference of religion breeds more quarrels than difference of politics.

—Wendell Phillips (*Speech*).

Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal ?

—Mahatma Gandhi (in *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*).

## II

Having, in the previous four chapters, dealt with the object and scope of this book, outlined Iqbal's career and catalogued his works in Persian and Urdu, discussed the greatness of the poet as testified to by some highly qualified authorities, and lastly asserted his true position as "a poet of India", respectively, I propose to survey in this, and the two succeeding chapters, the religious, philosophical, and political background, which should be kept in view, and duly appreciated, if one is to form a correct estimate of the work and worth of Iqbal as a poet. Accordingly, I shall discuss in this chapter the poet's religious outlook as reflected in his poems, which he composed after his return from Europe, after completing his studies. The years that followed Iqbal's return from Europe to India, in 1908, were full of political commotion and unrest in several countries, as a result of which the Indian Mussalmans started taking an unusual interest in the affairs of their co-religionists abroad. It induced a large number of Muslims in India to entertain a feeling of extra-territoriality—otherwise known as Pan-Islamism—a sort of religious sympathy, which overleaping the bounds of one's

own country, goes not to one's en-religionists of other countries. Iqbal greatly fostered, by his poems, composed after 1908, this feeling, and wrote at that time several verses which are believed to be modelled on those elegiac poems which were composed by the great Persian poet—Sheikh Maslahudin, "Saadi" (of Shiraz)—when Baghdad was destroyed, in 1258, by the savage hordes of Halaku. This religio-political phase of Iqbal's career had been sometimes challenged or denied by those who were anxious to make out that the poet was not influenced by Pan-Islamic ideals, in his poems. I shall content myself, at this stage of the discussion, with quoting an extract from a significant speech made by Iqbal himself. This is what he said :—"I confess to be a Pan-Islamist. The mission for which Islam came into this world will ultimately be fulfilled, the world will be purged of infidelity and the worship of false gods, and the true soul of Islam will be triumphant. I convey the same message to the Mussalmans through my poems. I want to see the same spirit in my co-religionists as once pervaded the early followers of Islam, who in spite of their wealth, never hankered after this mortal world. This is the religious spirit which was manifest among the Mussalmans when they were kings and emperors, and believed in the principle that the whole earth belongs to God and none else. This is the kind of Pan-Islamism which I preach". Again in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal expressed this very view that "Islam is non-territorial in character"—a conception which militates against the very idea of modern nationalism, which is (rightly or wrongly) identified, but too closely, in the mind of non-Muslim humanity, with one land or country. Iqbal also gave expression to his idea in the following verse :—

We are not Afghans, nor Turks, nor Tartars.  
Born of a garden we belong to a single bough.

Discrimination in colour and caste is forbidden to us,  
For we are the blossoms of a single spring.

Nothing could be clearer than this declaration. Not only does Iqbal declare himself to be a Pan-Islamist—he applies the very term to himself—but he emphasises in language of no uncertain import that it is the message of Pan-Islamism that he seeks to convey through his poems. He was thus inspired by the vision of a world-wide theocratic State in which all Muslims, no longer divided by barriers of race, colour, and country, should live as one fraternity. As a sympathetic interpreter of Iqbal put it : " The idea of a territorial patriotism and nationalism was hateful to him, and the race idea, by which it was actuated, was regarded by him as the dreadful invention of the Devil ". Again, in his *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, issued in 1916, he dealt with the life of the Islamic community on those lines, and he harped upon the cry of " Back to Early Islam ", which he hoped and believed would vitalize the movement, and ensure the triumph. He held and preached, that " Hindu intellectualism and Islamic sufism had destroyed the capacity of Muslims for action based on scientific observation and interpretation of phenomena, which distinguished the Western people ". But as Iqbal neither understood, nor cared to understand " Hindu intellectualism ", his views on it need not be discussed here.

### III

As regards Iqbal's grievance against sufism, " he appeals from the alluring raptures of Hafiz "—wrote Dr. Nicholson—in the course of the preface written by him to the translation of Iqbal's poem—" to the moral fervour of Jalal-ud-din Rumi, from an Islam sunk in Platonic contemplation to the fresh and vigorous monotheism which inspired Muhammad and brought Islam into existence ". He goes on to say :—" His criticism of Hafiz called forth

almost exclusively in Persian, which was regarded as the cultural language of the Mussalmans in some of the Muslim countries in Asia. It was to attain this object that he preferred to compose his poems in the foreign idiom of Iran rather than in his mother-tongue (Punjabi), or even in the acquired language of Hindustan, in which he had served his apprenticeship. "Iqbal", as an early commentator on his poems justly remarked, "dreams of a world ruled by religion, not by politics, and he thinks and feels as a Muslim". If his influence, as a poet, contributed to the revival of Indo-Muslim activities, it was because he became, during the second stage of his career, essentially a poet of Islamic renaissance. Innumerable lines can be quoted, alike from his Persian and Urdu poems, in support of this view; in fact, they bestrew almost the whole range of his poetical works composed after his return from Europe. If but a few examples will suffice, here is his clarion call for Muslim unity, which he sounds to his fellow-religionists: "If to be a Muslim in these days means to quarrel with one another, I shall then convert the Muslims into non-Muslims." Again, the following two couplets will serve as specimen of much that is to be found, on the same lines in Iqbal's poetry:—

The glitter of modern civilization dazzles the sight ;  
 But it is only a clever piecing together of false gems,  
 The wisdom or science, in which the wise ones of the  
 West took such pride,  
 Is but a warring sword in the blood-red (or ruddy) hand  
 of greed and ambition.

The materials brought together, in this chapter from the declarations of Iqbal himself, from the comments of his sympathetic exponents, and from passages in his poems, can leave no manner of doubt of the sentiments underlying (or rather overlying) the writings of the poet, during the second stage of his career as a poet, that is

from 1908 onwards. I am far from suggesting that he was altogether wrong in his view on this particular point, for a student of Islam, unless he is careful, in the interpretation of the texts concerned, may be led to the same conclusion as that arrived at by Iqbal—namely, that Islam enjoins on its followers extra-territorialism in *all* respects. I shall argue later that the Islamic brotherhood need not be regarded as an antithesis to what is now understood by the term “nationalism”. Whether such a theory, as Iqbal expounded in his works, is suited to the necessities and requirements of the modern world, in general, or to the conditions of India (with the very large non-Muslim population), in particular, is a question with which I am not concerned, at present. But it may be accepted that the sentiments expressed by Iqbal, in the second stage of his career, embody the popular view of Islam,—as obtaining in India, though not in Turkey, Iran or Egypt—on the question of nationalism versus extra-territorialism. The effect of introducing such a sentiment in Iqbal’s poems, and the consequences ensuing therefrom, with special reference to the conditions of modern India, are discussed elsewhere in this book, where it is sought to establish that neither is Islam opposed to territorial nationalism, nor has the theory propounded by Iqbal of extra-territorialism ever been brought into existence, in the political sphere, in the history of any of the Islamic States. But there can be no doubt that Iqbal was obsessed with it, and it is, therefore, essential to understand his attitude in regard to it, to be able to appraise his works produced under its influence.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### Iqbal's Philosophical Background.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

—Shakespeare (*Hamlet*).

Besides, he was a shrewd philosopher,  
And had read ev'ry-text and gloss over ;  
What'er the crabbed'st author hath,  
He understood b'implicit faith.

—Butler (*Hudibras*).

Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded.

—Carlyle (*Essay on History*).

The first step towards philosophy is incredulity.

—Denis Diderot (*Last Conversations*).

Philosophy goes no further than probabilities, and in every assertion keeps a doubt in reserve

—Froude (*Short Studies on Great Subject*).

The philosopher is Nature's pilot. And there you have our difference : to be in hell is to drift : to be in heaven is to steer.

—Bernard Shaw (*Man and Superman*).

What is the first business of one who practises philosophy ? To part with self-conceit. For it is impossible for any one to begin to learn what he thinks he already knows.

—Epictetus (*Discourses*).

The Arabians say that Abul Khair, the mystic, and Abu Ali Secna, the philosopher, conferred together : and on parting the philosopher said : " All that he sees I know ", and the mystic said : " All that he knows I see ".

—Emerson (*Representative Men : " Swedenborg "*).

" Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to be dogmatical ".

—David Hume (*Essays*).

" A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious ".

—Dr. Watts (*Sermons*).

" Philosophy has been described as a search after Truth, and from this it has been, with an easy transition, identified with Truth. And what is Truth, asked jesting Pilate, and humanity is still continuing to put that question. The question will continue to be unanswerable, till we answer the variant question, what is philosophy? Man is a rational being in spite of all his irrationalities. He has a right to think for himself, and if he is denied this right because of his birth, or because of the disciplined garrison of commentators, there can be no real philosophy—there can be only soulless repetitions of formulae, no real breadth of thought. Man lives in a changing world, and a philosophy which takes for granted that such changes have no significance for human life is bound to become dead with the lapse of time. Philosophy, in its perennial search after Truth, will always be fresh, if it has its eyes and ears, and reason, open to new currents of thought. If it chooses to entrench itself behind the learned tomes of commentators, it can only be of antiquarian interest ".

—Extracts from " And What Is Philosophy ? " by Prof.

A. R. Wadia, Barrister-at-Law, in the *Vedanta Kesari* (of Madras), for May, 1944.

## II.

I shall now deal with the philosophy which Iqbal evolved and preached, mainly in his poems composed in Persian, and also in some of his Urdu verses. To be able to appreciate it, one must keep in mind the background of the poet's philosophy by which his writings are believed to have been influenced. To take the Arabian philosophy first : " it has not "—in the words of Dr. T. J. De Boer, in his *History of Philosophy in Islam*, the standard work on the subject—" distinguished itself either by propounding new problems, or by any peculiarity in its endeavours to solve the old ones. It has, therefore, no advances in thought to register ", and, that writer adds : " we can

hardly speak of a Muslim Philosophy in the proper sense of the term". The same view is also expressed in so authoritative a work as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* :— "What is known as 'Arahian' philosophy owed to Arabia little more than its name and its language. It was a system of Greek thought called into existence, and kept alive, by the intrepidity and zeal of a small band of thinkers, who stood suspected and disliked in the eyes of their nation. Their chief claim to the notice of the historian of philosophy comes from their warm reception of Greek philosophy, when it had been banished from its original soil, and whilst western Europe was still too rude and ignorant to be its home. In Al-Mamun's reign (813—833), Aristotle was first translated into Arabic. To the Arahiens Aristotle represented and summed up Greek philosophy. From first to last Arahian philosophers made no claim to originality ; their aim was merely to propagate the truth of Peri-pateticism, as it had been delivered to them". Another great authority, Dr. Joseph Hell—in his *Arab Civilisation*—writes on the same subject as follows :—"Aristotle became the supreme teacher of the Arahs. What he taught was accepted almost unchallenged. With some slight exceptions, unquestioned was his lead, or rather dictatorship." Briefly put, Arabian philosophy is thus a chapter—and a long-ince closed one—in the history of the study of Greek philosophy in mediæval times. As Iqbal himself candidly acknowledges (in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*) : "Greek philosophy has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam" which "very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers" and "the philosophers of Islam received inspiration from Greek thought".

### III

What about the German philosopher, Nietzsche? The sum and substance of his many volumes is a system to



quote from a standard work) "denouncing all religion, and treating all moral laws as remnants of Christian superstition. His ideal, 'the overman', or 'the superman', to be developed by giving unbridled freedom to the struggle for existence, will seek only his own power and pleasure, and know not pity". It is the popular cult, we are told, in the Germany of to-day. And how about the French philosopher, Bergson? Well, "He maintained" (to quote the same work, again) "the reality of time and the concrete reality of conscious life". Now, what is there in common between the Arabian philosophy, on the one hand, derived from the Greek system—which on the authority of Iqbal himself, "very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers"—and of Nietzsche and Bergson on the other hand, the two latter being themselves poles apart in their thought and outlook on life? Is it possible for even the greatest philosophical genius to reconcile the obviously irreconcilable? It is thus by no means surprising that Iqbal with three such conflicting elements as Arabian Aristoteleanism, Nietzsche's supermanism and Bergson's pan-vitalism, or "creative evolutionism, and also the influence of two British thinkers, detailed reference to whom will be found later—as his background, failed in evolving a cogent and coherent system of philosophy. It was evidently judging from this point of view that the *Times*, in its obituary notice of the poet, wrote with special reference to his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought of Islam* that "soundness and exactitude of historical judgment were not his special endowment". This view is confirmed by a well-known Indo-Muslim scholar, Mr. Ahdnllah Ynsnf Ali, who (in the course of an address on the poet) expressed himself to the effect that "while Iqbal denounced Plato, with no appreciation of his influence on early Islamic thought, he rejected moderns like Nietzsche as mere materialists".

This brief outline, however, may not satisfy those who regard Iqbal as a great, and an original, philosopher, and who would insist upon a fuller discussion of his philosophy, to be able to appreciate the philosophic conceptions embodied in his poems. Possessing but a nodding acquaintance with philosophy, I would have despaired of satisfying such philosophically-minded readers, but fortunately an elaborate and luminous discussion of Iqbal's philosophy had appeared from the pen of a highly qualified authority. As it is not possible to incorporate the whole of it in this chapter, I shall offer a *resume* of it—a condensed and systematic digest—for the benefit of the reader; and a perusal of which will satisfy him that though the German philosopher, Nietzsche, and the French philosopher, Bergson, might have, at one stage or another, influenced, to some extent, the philosophic conceptions of Iqbal, yet it was not so much the two continental philosophers, mentioned above, who influenced Iqbal's philosophy, as the two British thinkers—McTaggart and Ward—with whom he was brought into contact, during the period of his stay at Cambridge (1905-8). This *resume* had been carefully read, and judiciously revised, by the writer of the essay—Professor M. M. Sharif—and approved of by him as a correct exposition of his views on the subject.

#### IV

In the essay contributed by him to the July, 1942, issue of *Islamic Culture* (issued under the authority of H. E. H. the Nizam's Government at Hyderabad, Deccan) Professor M. M. Sharif, of the Muslim University, at Aligarh, had discussed with great philosophical acumen, the sources of, and the influences on, Iqbal's philosophy—though the article is modestly called "Iqbal's Conception of God". It should be carefully studied by all students of the subject as it presents a highly critical but a fair and impartial outline of Iqbal's philosophical thought and its

development. The learned Professor divides it into three distinct periods. "In the first period," writes he, which extended from 1901 to about 1908, "Iqbal conceives of God as Eternal Beauty, existing in independence of, and prior to, particulars, and yet being revealed in them all". After having dilated upon this text, and established his point, the writer emphasises the view quoted above, and then sums up as follows: "This, in brief, is Iqbal's conception of God in the first period of his thought. It does not seem difficult to trace its source. It is fundamentally Platonic. For Plato also regards God as Eternal Beauty, as a Universal nature which is prior to particulars, and is manifested in them all as form". So the long and short of it is that "this Platonic conception, as interpreted by Plotinus, adopted by the early Muslim scholastics, and adapted to Pantheism by the pantheistic mystics, came down to Iqbal as a long tradition in Persian and Urdu poetry, and was supplemented by his study of the English romantic poets". But later—as we shall see—Iqbal vehemently denounced and ridiculed Plato in unmeasured terms, for which there was absolutely no justification.

Professor Sharif then proceeds:—"The second period of Iqbal's mental development may be dated from about 1908 to 1920. From 1905 to 1908 Iqbal studied under McTaggart and James Ward, at Cambridge. During the same period he made a deep study of Rumi in connection with his Cambridge thesis. The influence of McTaggart and Ward on Iqbal failed to make itself felt till after his return from England; while he was there, he remained a pantheistic mystic. This is corroborated by McTaggart in his letter to Iqbal on the publication of Nicholson's English translation of his *Secrets of the Self*. 'Have you not changed your position very much?', enquires McTaggart, and adds, 'surely, in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more a

pantheist and mystic?'. The fact that this remark of McTaggart's has been quoted by Iqbal himself in one of his articles without any challenge, proves that he regarded it as being true of his position. In about 1908, however, Iqbal began to appreciate McTaggart's conception of personal immortality. He also began to see an identity between the theistic pluralism of Ward and the metaphysical position of Rumi, and soon became a theistic pluralist himself. A little later Rumi was adopted by him as his spiritual leader and life-long guide, because Rumi anticipates some of the fundamental ideas of his two new finds—Nietzsche and Bergson".

## V

And thus from following the lead of one of the earliest Greek philosophers (Plato), Iqbal came to place himself under the guidance of the mediæval poet-philosopher, the famous Sufi, Jalal-ud-deen Rumi, inspired though he was by the ideas of the modern British, German and French philosophers named above. "Thus under the leadership of an old oriental philosopher, and with the aid of several modern European thinkers, Iqbal"—continues Professor Sharif—"began to develop his own philosophy of the self. It is in the light of this philosophy that one must understand Iqbal's ever-decreasing belief in the efficiency and eternity of beauty—a change in his attitude which takes him far away from Platonism and pantheistic mysticism. Iqbal formulates his new philosophy in the later poems of *Bang-i-Dara*, in *Asrar-i Khudi* and in *Ramuz-i-Bekhudi*. Following Fichte and Ward, Iqbal tells us that the self posits from itself the not-self for its own perfection". Here then we discover the sources of, and the influences upon, the philosophic thought of Iqbal, during the second period—the renunciation of Platonic mysticism, and the co-ordination of Rumi's sufism with the modern concep-

tious derived from the European philosophers of the twentieth century.

The result was that Iqbal formed the opinion, which (in the words of Professor Sharif) was that " God, the ultimate reality, is the Absolute Self, the Supreme Ego. He is no longer to be conceived as Eternal Beauty—as block reality. Plato, and poets like Hafiz who hold such a view, are all to be condemned. God is now regarded as Eternal Will, and beauty is reduced to the position of an attribute of His, an attribute which covers now both the aesthetic and the moral value. Instead of God's beauty, His unity is now emphasised. Such, in brief, is Iqbal's conception of God at this second period of his thought ". It is this second period thought of Iqbal's which finds expression in his three collections of poems—the *Bang-i-Dara* (in Urdu), and the *Asrar-i-Khudi* and the *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (in Persian), in which the Platonic mysticism, and Hafizian sufism, are vehemently trounced and traduced.

## VI

The third period of Iqbal's mental development extended from about 1920 to his death, in 1938. " If the second period be regarded as a period of growth, this should be taken "—writes Professor Sharif—" as a period of maturity. He has already accepted the influences which his genius has allowed him to accept. He has collected the elements of his synthesis, and now elaborates them into an all-round system. His philosophy in this period may be aptly described as the philosophy of change. The idea of Reality as self is still prominent, but that of change is more so ". Professor Sharif discusses at length the philosophic conceptions of Iqbal during this third period, not in their broad content and general scope, but with special reference to the poet's ideal of God. The Professor then writes :—" A perfect individuality means to Iqbal, as

to Bergson, an organic whole of which no detached part can live separately", and affirms that "according to Iqbal, Bergson rightly holds that experience is the past moving along, and rolling into the present, but he is wrong in denying the teleological character to reality on the ground that 'the portals of the future must remain wide open to Reality'. The Ultimate Ego is purposive. Our unity of consciousness does not only fold within itself the past but has a forward movement also. It has reference to a purpose to the future. Purpose is really nothing but a forward movement in consciousness". After having elaborated the point the learned writer winds up his exposition by stating: "This is a brief account of Iqbal's conception of God in its final stage". It is this latest philosophic conception which Iqbal expounded in eight works, which were brought out in rapid succession between 1923 and 1938.

I shall conclude the discussion of Iqbal's philosophy, in the light of the critical observations of Professor Sbarif, whose illuminating exposition of the subject—which should be read in full—I have tried to condense and summarize, in his own words. It had been made clear—and the point needs emphasising in view of the prevalence of a mass of uncritical opinion on the subject—that there was not one systematic philosophy which could be associated with the name of Iqbal, but at least three different sets of thought developed by him, from time to time, under the stress of divergent influences, which are lucidly set out by the erudite Professor of Aligarh as follows.—"His (Iqbal's) studies in Western philosophy for his M. A. degree in India, and his research work in Muslim philosophy in England and Germany, prepared the ground for Iqbal's philosophy, in general, and the problem of Divine reality, in particular; and his early religious training supplied the seed, out of which grew a beautiful plant which was

trained to take its final shape by the philosophies of Rumi, McTaggart, James Ward, Bergson and Nietzsche. Whatever the influence of others in other directions, with regard to the solution of the problem in hand, Iqbal's thought was moulded chiefly by Ward". As regards other philosophic thought, which Iqbal rejects or accepts, the Professor writes: "Nietzsche's philosophy is Godless. His obsession with the idea of the superman makes his ideas of society and reality sink into insignificance. Bergson's creative impulse is very much like Schopenhauer's unconscious purpose. The ultimate reality for Iqbal, on the other hand, is God as conscious and personal. McTaggart finds the destiny and goal of the self in eternity and not in serial time. Rumi has very much in common with Iqbal, yet much of his thought can be interpreted in pantheistic terms. The case of Ward is, however, different. His influence on Iqbal is greater. To measure this influence one has only to see the common elements in their respective views about the problem in hand". It would thus be seen that, according to Professor Sharif, though Rumi amongst oriental thinkers, and Nietzsche and Bergson amongst modern European philosophers, had all their influence—in a small or a large measure—on Iqbal's philosophic thought, nevertheless he owed most to the British thinkers (McTaggart and James Ward) and between these two, in particular to Ward (b. 1843—d. 1925), the author of some highly instructive and thought-provoking works on philosophy, two of the most famous being the works—Naturalism and Agnosticism (1895-99), and The Realms of Ends or Pluralism and Theism (1911).

## VII

Professor Sharif brings into prominent relief a comparison of the views of Iqbal and Ward as follows:— "Both of them, after the manner of Kant, reject the three notorious arguments for the existence of God, discard

Platonism, and Absolutism, and object to regarding omniscience as fore-knowledge of a pre-ordained reality, and to applying the idea of serial time both to God and to the finite self—and all this for exactly the same reasons. Both are pluralist, theist, and spiritual monists. Both believe in the creative freedom and immortality of the individual. For both the sensuous world is due to interaction between egos, the body is created by the mind to serve its own purposes, and serial time is only an act of the mind. Both hold on exactly the same grounds, and in exactly the same sense, that God is an infinite, conscious, omnipotent and omniscient spirit, which is immanent in the finite egos, and yet transcends them just as every organism is immanent in its parts and yet transcends these parts. For both He is a perfectly free creative spirit that limits its own freedom by creating free finite egos, and for both this internal limitation is not inconsistent with His own perfect freedom. According to both, God is perfect throughout his creative progress, for this progress is progress in perfection, not *towards* perfection. Both hold that God's will functions through the will of the finite egos. Both believe with Wundt that reason can prove the necessity for faith, but cannot turn faith into knowledge. Both agree that belief in God is ultimately a matter of faith, though of a rational faith, that conviction or complete certitude about Him comes not from reason but from living, that direct communion with Him is gained only through *rappart* or love, and that it is only through love for Him that Immortality is achieved by the finite self". I make no apology for quoting this long but luminous passage from Professor Sharif's article, which offers an excellent comparison of the philosophic views of Iqbal with those of Ward, who (according to the writer) influenced the poet's thought intensively.

### VIII

Professor Sharif then records his conclusion in the following terms : — " From all this, Iqbal's indebtedness to



Ward is obvious. Perhaps, with full justice, one can regard him as Ward's disciple, but it will be a mistake to think that Iqbal does not go beyond Ward's conception of God. He certainly does, and that also in a very important respect. Ward regards God as eternal, but fails to explain eternity, chiefly because he has no idea of time as non-serial. Iqbal, taking his cue from a saying of the Prophet of Islam in which time is identified with God, accepts Bergson's theory of pure duration with some modifications, and thereby succeeds not only in explaining Divine eternity, but also in laying greater emphasis on the dynamic aspect of reality. Again, Iqbal's idea of perfection is not the same as that of Ward. It is partly Bergsonian and partly his own. All unprejudiced readers may accept the Professor's conclusion that though Iqbal went, in "a very important respect", further than his teacher—partly influenced by the French philosopher, Bergson, and partly as the result of his own mental development—he is, nonetheless, in the realm of thought, one who can aptly be called "Ward's disciple". There can be no gainsaying the fact (on the unimpeachable authority of Professor Sharif) that Iqbal's philosophic conceptions were influenced in the second and third stages by Rumi, Nietzsche, Bergson, McTaggart (b. 1866-d. 1925)—Lecturer on Philosophy at Cambridge (from 1897 to 1923), and author of *The Nature of Existence* (1921-27)—and, more particularly, by James Ward, to such an extent that Professor Sharif feels justified in describing him as "Ward's disciple".

Lastly, Professor Sharif concludes his illuminating discussion with the following just and impartial estimate of Iqbal's philosophy:—"When we compare the methods of Ward, Bergson and Iqbal, we find that, like the Neo-Idealists of Italy, all three of them start from the individual experience. There seems to be nothing wrong with this procedure. Since we are certain before all other things of our own experience it is much the

best procedure, though, as Iqbal himself thinks, not the only right procedure, to make this experience the starting-point in our search for the Ultimate. Nevertheless, there is one great danger in this our best method of study. This danger lies in the pitfall of viewing everything anthropomorphically, and to me it seems that both Ward and Iqbal have fallen into this pitfall."

The above outline of Iqbal's philosophical conceptions and their development, as expounded by Professor Sharif, conclusively establishes the following points:—Iqbal began as a Platonist, and a mystic of the type represented by one of the greatest Persian poets Hafez. Thereafter his philosophic notions underwent a change—if not a complete change—and he came, at Cambridge, under the influence of McTaggart, Rumi, Nietzsche, Bergson, and also later of Ward, with the result that on his return to India, in 1908, he expressed his views freely, as moulded by these influences in the three collections of poems issued by him between 1908 and 1920. Still later, he came more and more under the influence of Ward, to the extent of becoming "Ward's disciple", and his views during this period (1920-1938) are found in the eight collections of poems published during these eighteen years.

## IX

The above digest of Professor Sharif's exposition of Iqbal's philosophy—which has been kindly read and approved by the writer as a correct statement of his views, and in which, all his suggestions and amendments have been embodied by me—affords ample material on which the reader can base his independent judgment. It is for him to consider whether Iqbal's philosophy can be held to be, in any sense, original, or even one systematic whole—conceived, and planned as a definite scheme (like Herbert Spencer's)—or whether it does not comprise an unsystematic series of thought derived from various sources, and developed under divergent influences of systems

ranging from Platonism to theistic pluralism, and ultimately to "viewing everything anthropomorphically", with the result that "both Ward and Iqbal have fallen into this pitfall"—to quote the very words of Professor Sharif. It is not for me to estimate and assess the value of Iqbal's changing system of thought as a contribution to Philosophy, since (as stated before) I am not concerned with him, so much as a philosopher as a poet. But after having perused carefully the above *resume* of Professor Sharif's exposition of Iqbal's philosophy, the reader can easily form his own opinion on the point whether the poet was, in any sense, a great philosopher, or an original thinker, or whether his philosophic ideas were a *rechauffe* of divergent conceptions of ancient, mediæval and modern thinkers, who influenced materially his philosophic thought, which he consequently changed from time to time. I shall discuss later whether the poet's philosophy—or rather philosophies—could form a suitable theme for poetry of the highest order. There are no doubt philosophic poets in almost every great literature—both in the East and the West. But, as we shall see, when we come to this part of the discussion, they are all poets first and philosophers afterwards. Was the same case with Iqbal, or otherwise? Let us wait and see.

For those who would like to make a closer study of the subject, I may refer to three important studies of Iqbal, as a philosopher, which appeared in 1944, and which merit the attention of students. These were Dr. Ishrat Hassan's *Metaphysics of Iqbal*, Mr Bashir Ahmad Dar's *A Study of Iqbal's Philosophy*, and a collection of eight essays, issued under the title of *Iqbal As a Thinker*. The third essay in the last volume is a reprint of Professor Sharif's contribution to *Islamic Culture*, which is dealt with, at some length, in this chapter. All these three volumes are useful contributions to the study of Iqbal as a philosopher.

Dr. Ishrat Hasan's book is a sober and non-controversial study, concentrating itself on Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, though his other books are also utilised, to some extent, by the author. Mr. Bashir Ahmad Dar's book is useful, but it treads, at places, on controversial ground, and falls foul of Mr. W. C. Smith, for his criticism of Iqbal in his *Modern Islam in India*, to which I shall refer at the proper place. The eight essays in *Iqbal As A Thinker* being a composite production, are naturally not of uniform standard or value; the best of the series being Professor Sharif's paper, referred to above. To the other essays, in the book, reference will be made by me, wherever it may be necessary to do so. So far as the main object of this thesis is concerned, with reference to Iqbal's philosophy, that has been fully achieved by the digest presented by me of the essay by Professor Sharif, who is a fair and an impartial expositor of Iqbal's philosophy. If Art be regarded as allied to Philosophy, reference may be made to the well-written essay on "Iqbal's Conception of Art" by Prof. Kalimud-din Ahmad (of the Patna College), who is a sound scholar, possessed of a critical mind. His essay appears in the volume *Iqbal As A Thinker*, mentioned above. Iqbal's conception of Art is also discussed by Mr. Roop Krishna—himself a well-known artist of Lahore—in his essay called *Iqbal*, in which while disapproving, or rather condemning, the subject-matter of the poems, he is appreciative of Iqbal's art as a poet. Lastly, it may be hoped that the days of "uncritical laudation" of Iqbal are over; and that his discriminating admirers will now produce works critical in spirit, though sympathetic in outlook—which only can generate the proper atmosphere for a true appreciation of the poet's work and worth.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### Iqbal's Political Background.

" Politics is a very complex business. It is the science of exigencies".

—Theodore Parker (*Sermons*)

" Politics are a field where action is one long second best."

—Lord Morley (*Essays*).

" I am opposed to notionalism, as it is understood in Europe, because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism, which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity. That which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical tradition—things worth living for and dying for—not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated. Islam, as a religion, has no country. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism, this degraded imperialism, are not shattered, so long men will never be able to lead a happy and contented life, and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity will never materialise."

—Extracts from *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*.

" He (Iqbal) draws his inspiration mainly from the teachings of Islam".

—Mr. M. G. Saiyidain, M A, in his essay on " Progressive Trends in Iqbal's Thought", in *Iqbal As A Thinker*.

// (" New occasions teach new duties ; Time makes ancient good uncouth,

They must upward still and onward who would keep  
abreast of Truth ;

Lo ! before us gleam her camp-fires ! We ourselves must  
pilgrims be,

Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the  
desperate winter sea,

Nor attempt the future's portals with the past's blood-  
rusted key".

—J. R. Lowell (*The Crisis*).

"The union of religion and Politics tends as the national out-look is widened, and the national horizon enlarged, to stunt progress and stereotype society".

—Salah-ud-din Khuda Bukhsh in his essay on  
"Islamic Conception of Sovereignty" (in his  
*Essays : Indian and Islamic*).

"It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact. It is not nationalism that is evil. It is narrowness, selfishness, and exclusiveness, that is evil".

—Mahatma Gandhi (in *Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*).

## II

Having discussed, in the last two chapters, Iqbal's religious and philosophic background, it would be as well to glance at the political theories that constituted the nucleus of Iqbal's poetry, so that the survey may be fairly complete. Here too—as in the case of his philosophical conceptions—we have the advantage of the guidance of a distinguished Indo-Muslim scholar, Mr. Ghulam Sarwar, who contributed a learned and luminous paper on "Some Aspects of Iqbal's Poetry", to the *S. P. Shah In Memoriam Volume*, edited by Mrs. Shah, and issued in 1941. In the course of his survey of Iqbal's poetry—to which reference is made elsewhere in this book - Mr. Sarwar devotes some space to the poet's political philosophy. And as it is an authoritative exposition, I make no apology for placing some salient passages from it before the readers, contenting myself with some comments which have occurred to me as arising out of the context. Writes Mr. Sarwar :—  
"Politics, being the principal field of action, had an absorbing interest for Iqbal. As he proceeded in life he examined and re-examined them in the light of his personal experience and gradually adjusted them to the scheme he finally preached. This scheme rejects all the modern political systems, and upholds the early Islamic polity, which invested the ruler with temporal as well as

spiritual powers. In his characteristically trenchant manner Iqbal reviewed Imperialism, Democracy, Bolshevism, Nationalism, and finally rejected them in favour of this polity". In other words, Iqbal's call was of "back to the early Islamic polity". And this polity, which had long since disappeared even from the Islamic world itself, Iqbal thought suited to the very complex conditions of the world to-day.

"The Muslim Confederation, he conceived of, is to be independent of geographical limits, and in it there is to be no distinction between one Muslim nation and the other," writes Mr. Sarwar, as the expositor of Iqbal's political philosophy. I need not, however, discuss seriously Iqbal's political views, as Mr. Sarwar himself criticises them severely and trenchantly, and exposes their utter untenability as follows :—"It is a fact that ultimately he veered towards communalism and Pan-Islamism, though the charge loses its sting owing to the fact that he began to preach these doctrines when he found the Islamic world threatened with extinction by the encroachment of other nations on her vital interests. The motives behind his views are above question, but we have to see how far they are practicable in the present age. Discarding all the modern systems of government, he reverted to the early Islamic polity under which the ruler was invested with temporal as well as spiritual powers."

Having explained Iqbal's theory, Mr. Sarwar thus offers his criticism of the poet's political thought : "It cost the world centuries of struggle and painful effort to separate the two (that is, 'temporal' and 'spiritual' powers) when they were becoming mutually incompatible. It is now well-nigh impossible to take a leap back more than a thousand years, and revive a system which has had its day, and was brushed aside as it had outlived its utility. Sentiments have no place in politics. New political and social problems seek new measures to solve them, and the

principles that governed the old Islamic polity are too simple to cope efficiently with the complex problems of the twentieth century. The current that has passed under the bridge cannot recede. His (Iqbal's) reverence and love for old Islamic traditions and rule is most laudable, but unfortunately his scheme offers no more than another Utopia to the world. It is more idealistic than practicable. Great thinker as he is, in the exuberance of his love for old Islamic conditions, he forgets the fact that conquered nations cannot easily divorce themselves from the psychology which they develop under forces of repression and tyranny. Reversion to conditions of unexampled purity and action, after ages of degeneration, inertia and corruption, is in the province of a miracle, and not of human possibility. In certain achievements we may certainly rise above them; they had their own standards of virtue and purity which could be attained only in their times. New generations require new methods to work out their salvation".

### III

I offer no apology for making the above extracts, for coming as they do from a translator into English of the Quran, author of *The Philosophy of the Quran*, of *The History of Islam*, and an admirer of Iqbal, they will naturally carry due weight. And so, in the result, Mr. Sarwar's discussion of Iqbal's political doctrine leads to the same conclusion as that of the poet's philosophical theories—that is untenable and unsound. In fact, it could not be otherwise, for a system of Philosophy or Politics can only appeal to intellectual humanity, if it is the product of a mind unfettered by settled convictions—such as Iqbal did not possess, by reason of his intense attachment to the early Islamic polity, as frankly admitted by his interpreter, Mr. Sarwar. Another upholder of evidently the same view as that held by Iqbal, Dr Aziz Ahmed, expresses his conception of early Islamic polity in the course of an essay on



"Islamic Polity and Modern Political Theory"—in the following terms:—"Islam is not a democracy—a government of the people, for the people and by the people. It is the rule of God, for the perfection of humanity, by the agents of God. It is the responsibility of the *millat*, and the *Amir*, to establish the rule of God according to the Book of God, and the traditions of the Prophet. Thus, the supremacy of the Divine Law is one of the fundamental tenets of Islamic polity, and the *Amir* and the members of the *millat* have to submit to the *shariat* for their guidance, considering it as the will and command of Allah." It is clear from the above that the Islamic system of government is not the democracy of the Western type, where a law may be enforced, changed or modified at the sweet will of the majority. In Islam, it is the rule of God, and it is the Law of God, that prevails".

Assuming the above exposition to be correct, an unprejudiced critic will easily realise—as Mr. Sarwar had done—that Iqbal's political doctrine "offers no more than another Utopia to the world—more idealistic than practicable" and that "new generations require new methods to work out their salvation". That is a lesson which Iqbal does not seem to have sought to appreciate, since he was a poet, and not a systematic thinker, or a trained politician. He, therefore, failed to realise that there had never existed, in the history of Islam, a political confederation of Muslim States, even once, for a short period. Whether it will ever come into existence is on the knees of the gods, while it is obvious that, under the system envisaged by Iqbal, the problem of Indian polity will remain insoluble. But leaving that aside, the trend of forces, influences, and tendencies even in Muslim countries is clearly diverging to the side of secular, national governments, and had already done so appreciably in that direction, instead of that of the temporal-spiritual one of the

early Islamic polity. Turkey had been for years—thanks to the genius of Kemal Pasha—a purely secular State, with no State religion. Some other Islamic States also—like Egypt and Iran—are clearly converging in the same direction. And yet it is this untenable political conception of an Islamic-world State that inspired the Muse of Iqbal. What wonder then that it fails to rouse enthusiasm in the heart of those who understand things aright, and who appreciate the true inwardness of the situation in the world to-day? It need cause one no surprise to find that Dr. Abdul Latif came to the same conclusion as Mr. Sarwar (and other critically-minded persons) that the poet's political ideal for Muslims of "a return to the past, will conflict with the progressive spirit of modern civilisation". But Iqbal does not appear to have been at all troubled with any such doubts or difficulties, and does not, therefore, care to explain them for the benefit or edification of the reader of his poems.

#### IV

In considering this question a study of the text of the Pact of the League of Arab States, will prove highly illuminating and significant. The full text of the Constitution of the League, which was signed at Cairo, on March 22nd, 1945, shows that the principal signatories to it were the Presidents of the Syrian and the Lebanese Republics, H. R. H. the Prince of Trans-Jordan; and Their Majesties the Kings of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Yemen. The preamble of the Constitution runs as follows:—"Desirous of strengthening the intimate ties that bind the Arab States, and anxious to cement and reinforce these ties based in respect of the Independence and Sovereignty of these States to direct their efforts towards the common weal of all the Arab countries, the improvement of their condition, the assurance for their future, and the realization of their aspirations; and in response to the wishes of Arab public

opinion in all the Arab countries (the signatories to the document) have decided to conclude a Pact to this end, and have named their plenipotentiaries, who after having exchanged the powers of attorney recognised valid in good and due form, have agreed on the following disposition." Of the twenty-two clauses in the Pact, I shall quote the text of clauses one and two only, which state clearly the aims and objects of the League. The seven Arab States which signed the Pact, as approving the Constitution of the League, were Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine. The Palestinian representative signed on behalf of his State. A copy of the Constitution was sent to Imam Yehia (of Yemen), which State was not represented at the Conference, so that he might join the League, if he he disposed to do so. Altogether, by far the larger number of Arab States, numbering seven, had signed the Pact, and approved of the Constitution of the League.

The first two clauses of the Arab League Pact are as follows :—Article I :—"The League of Arab States is composed of independent Arab States that have signed this Pact. Any independent Arab State may become a member of the League." Article II : "The League has for its object to draw closer the relations between Member States, and co-ordinate their political action in view to realise an intimate collaboration between them, safeguard their independence and sovereignty and to interest itself, in general, in all questions connected with Arab countries and their interests. It has also in view to ensure, within the frame of the regime, and the conditions prevailing in each State, a close co operation between the State Members in the following matters : (a) economic and financial questions, including trade, exchange, customs, currency, agriculture and industry ; (b) communications, including railways, roads, aviation, navigation, and posts and

telegraphs ; (c) cultural matters ; (d) questions connected with nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments and extradition ; (e) social welfare matters and (f) public health.

This international document is highly significant,—alike for what it contains, and for what it does not. Taking the omissions first, it is striking that there is absolutely no reference in it to anything even remotely connected with religion—the words “Islam”, or “Muslim”, or “Pan-Islamism”, or any other similar term—being conspicuous by its absence. This document, in which the Arabic-speaking States have combined to face the future, has thus no religious stunt, shibboleth, or slogan ; nor is it actuated or inspired by any creedal source. On the contrary, it draws its sustenance purely from two sources—racial unity and common linguistic bond. The Pact had been characterised by some Indian Muslim leaders as an “unfortunate development, the product of the European theory of nationality.” This statement (if made by way of a criticism of the Arab States League Pact) is perfectly correct, for it is clearly “the product of the European theory of nationality”. As such it amply supports all that I have said in this book on the trend of political forces in various Muslim States, and countries, outside India. The Arab States League is not at all based on, or inspired by, the Islamic theory of the State, or on any feeling for Pan-Islamism. It is clearly based on the consideration of common race and language but not a common religion. Hence why, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and some other Muslim States—both in Asia and Africa—which are not Arab by race, or Arabic-speaking in speech, had been excluded specifically from the League, in the clearest terms embodied in the text of its Constitution.

## V

I, therefore, contend that the establishment of the League is the fullest vindication of all that I have stated in

this book about the political conceptions and ideals of Islam, as interpreted and propounded by Iqbal, being wholly unsuited to the working of modern States, even in Muslim countries, to say nothing of a country like India. When it is recalled that Iqbal was the deadliest enemy of the ideal of Nation States, and believed in one Muslim federation, or confederation, the formation of the Arab States League is a sad commentary on the views expressed by him, in his poems. To recall but one of his anti-national poems :—

“ The biggest of the new idols is the idol of the country—the *watan* or motherland ; but the robe which adorns it is the shroud of religion (Islam). Quite new is the culture reflected from the contours of this idol, which is destructive of the Islamic structure of society ” ; ending with the forceful line :—“ O Muslims, let us pulverise this idol (of national patriotism) to the very dust.” And yet before even seven years of the death of the poet had elapsed, there had come into existence the Arab States League Pact based on the very ideal of national, secular States, and having nothing to do with the theocratic ideal, as it obtained during the early Caliphate in Arabia, which ideal was so sedulously fostered and sponsored by Iqbal in his poems.

Writing on the formation of the Arab Union a well-informed publicist (Mr Frank O'Brien) expresses his view as follows :—“ A powerful sense of racial homogeneity, and historical alignment, have pushed the Arab States into Union. The sense of racial brotherhood had been growing steadily ; and Arab nationalism had grown rapidly ”. That is exactly the contention raised by me in this section—that the Arab Union was the result of racial homogeneity, and not identity of religion. As regards India, Prof. Mohammad Habib, of the Aligarh University, (writing in the *India Quarterly* for April, 1945, in the course of an article called “ Pan-Islamism to Nationalism ”) expresses

his view, on the subject, as follows :—" Even the Mussalmans of India realise that the days of Muslim Inter-national Caliphate are gone ; and that in India, as elsewhere, Islam must find expression through a territorial State—national and sovereign. A Mussalman who still believes in the Caliphate may be safely put down as a mental case. In a way nationalism is as old as civilisation itself, for a man by his fate is tied down to his soil—the soil which he cultivates, the soil for which he is taxed, the soil to which he returns ". It would be idle to comment on the proposition set forth by so careful an observer of the trend of political forces in the Muslim world as Prof. Habib.

That the Arab movement is absolutely non-religious, and purely secular, in its aims and objects, is further evidenced by the statement made in September, 1945, by Mr. Attiya, one of its leaders, who is in charge of the Arab League Office, in London :—" Of course, the Muslims in the Arab countries have spiritual affinity with the Muslims in India. But this does not mean any support for Pakistan, or pan-Islamism. We in the Arab world are deeply interested in the idea of a Federation of the Near and Middle Eastern countries and India, as formulated in the Congress resolution of August, 1942. We have been inspired by the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ; and we are deeply touched that soon after their release from prison, though they were pre occupied with the urgent Indian problems, they found time to express an unequivocal support for the Arab aspirations. We will not forget this fraternal gesture of friendship ". He added : " I profoundly regret that certain private and personal letters had been twisted in Muslim League circles signifying the Arab League's support for Pakistan. In view of it, I would emphasise that the *Arab Liberation movement* is not religious in

*character ; nor is it Muslim. It is non-communal and secular in conception. It contains Muslims as well as Christians, all united on the platform of the Arab world".* Nothing could be more conclusive than M. Attiya's declaration on the contentions raised in this chapter. No people are more devoted to the tenets and traditions of Islam than are the Arabs ; which is but natural considering that it was amongst them that the Prophet himself (on whom be peace) preached the religion he founded. That they have now organised themselves on a wholly non-religious and purely secular basis, for political and economic purposes, is an event the significance of which even one who runs may read with advantage.

---

## CHAPTER VIII

### Iqbal's Basic Sentiment

"Life is so complex that it cannot be identified with only one particular doctrine, however indubitable it may be to some particular thinker or his commentator. It is best to look upon it as a perennial search after truth. Truth is as wide as the universe in its evolution *yuga* after *yuga*. If we seek to bind it, we do so at our peril, for thereby we bind not only ourselves but all humanity : we inhibit not only its power but even its right to think. Truth is there. But it has to be discovered by each soul for itself, and in this voyage of discovery it has a right to learn from all the varied richness of human thought in the past. We are in honour bound to revere the teachers of the past, but we must not renounce our right to think for ourselves, and in this right we have the sum and substance of philosophy."

—Extracts from "And What Is Philosophy?", by Professor A. R. Wadia, Barrister-at-Law, in the *Vedant Kesari* (of Madras) for May, 1944.

## II

Having discussed in the last three chapters Iqbal's religious, philosophical, and political conceptions and ideals, I shall now quote some passages, in support of the basic sentiments expressed in them—that Islam was the only universal religion for all mankind—collected from statements made by the friendly and sympathetic interpreters of the poet. Thus the earliest of them, who signed himself as "A Friend", wrote : "Iqbal was essentially a poet of Islam, for his poems, specially those written in Persian, have all been inspired by Islam". This then was—according to the writer—the sum and substance of Iqbal's teaching as a poet, and the *raison-d'être* of his poems. The same writer continued :—"According to Islam, patriotism is part of religion, but not the whole religion. This explains why there is so little reference to India in his (Iqbal's)



poems", since he "had to deal with the entire Muslim world, and not with India alone. Iqbal was the bard of Islam". If that be the case, it would be highly creditable that of all countries in this world, Hindustan—and not Afghanistan, Arabia, Baluchistan, Central Asia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Palestine, Syria or Turkey—should have produced in the twentieth century "the bard of Islam". Similarly, an Education Minister of Bengal—the hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan—declared his opinion (in the course of an address delivered at the "Iqbal Day" celebration held in Calcutta, in 1944) that "Iqbal's special message is to the world of Islam. He has traced and analysed the inner spiritual history of Islam as no one else has done. He has opened the eyes of the Islamic world towards its real goal, and has shown the path that it must follow to reach that goal"—thus confirming what is quoted above. Yet another interpreter of the poet—anonymous but sympathetic—has thus expressed his view of Iqbal's position as a poet:—"True, his patriotism is not of India, but neither is it of any other land or clime", for "not of Ind or Ram or Sham is my being", says the poet.—"The word Arabia occurs fairly frequently in his writings", adds the same writer, and quotes as sample the following lines:—

"Colour, birth, flesh, bones.  
Is Arabia proud of these?  
Then, abjure Arabia too".

And so Iqbal having no preference for territorial "nationalism", allowed—according to his sympathetic interpreters—his poetic gifts to be dedicated to his religious sentiments. But I may point out that his generous appreciation of some great Hindus—in one of his latest poems, *Javed Nameh* ("The Book of Eternity")—merits attention, as the very first great spirit met in heaven is that of a Hindu saint, and one of the last is that of the

Hindu poet, Bhartrihari. That shows the poet's innate catholicity, to which I have referred in a previous chapter. Yet, another friendly expositor of Iqbal tries to reconcile Iqbal's studied antipathy to nationalism in the following terms—"He began by composing a national song. His outlook was not narrow in the field of the service of his country. He wrote patriotic poetry, and if a united India was the vision of Iqbal's verse, a united Islam was its logical outcome"—the corollary, so to say, of the poet's vision of a "united India". This is a type of analysis or synthesis (call it what you like) which would be rather hard for the average student of literature or literary critic, to accept or to appreciate. But to quote further:—"In Iqbal Muslim India felt it had found its spokesman", wrote another votary of the poet. "As a good Muslim, Iqbal firmly believes that the salvation of humanity lies in its adopting the Muslim view of life. As a philosopher he expounds this point of view, and shows its universal applicability. As a poet he invests this philosophy with its appropriate emotional background. His poetry, being an emotional interpretation of the Islamic conception of life and God, is therefore pan-Islamic. But, in spite of this pan-Islamic and, in a sense, communal bias, the most dominant note in his poetry is that which deals with man and his freedom". Freedom from what, it may well be asked? From political bondage, or from mental or spiritual bondage? There is admittedly very little of political freedom in Iqbal's poetry, either for India, or for even any one of the Muslim countries, several of which (like Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Afghanistan) have gained independence in recent years. The poet's patriotic poems relating to India have been brought together and discussed in a previous chapter.

### III

Another commentator on Iqbal's poetry—Dr. Hafiz Syed, who is entitled to be heard—wrote on this subject as

follows :— “ In the first period of his poetic life, and before his visit to Europe, Iqbal believed in nationalism, and wrote inspiring national poems. His sojourn in Europe, and his deeper insight into the religion and philosophy of Islam, made him revise his national ideals. On further reflection he was convinced that the universal spirit of Islam, and the ideal of nationalism, were not compatible with each other. Therefore, in response to his deeper allegiance to the tenets of Islam, he renounced it in favour of the (Muslim) international ideal, which he thought was far more rational and durable than the fleeting, ever-changing, and discordant ideals of separate nationalism. He looked forward to Islamic fraternity being more far-reaching in its influence and, in the long run, serving as workable basis of human unity than national creeds howsoever fascinating. Almost all his poetic thoughts and themes were coloured by his philosophy of life which had its basis in Islam of pristine purity ”. And as Professor Mujeeb, another well-known Muslim scholar, justly put it : “ Iqbal's muse became Muslim, and there are those who regret his change from nationalism to communalism ”.

Another anonymous expositor of Iqbal summed up his view of the poet's work and sentiments, as follows :—“ Iqbal's earlier poems, in purposive strain, portray a vigorous mind full of enthusiasm and activity, and tender affections for his country. His poem *Sach Kah dun Aye Brahman* still remains the most moving appeal for communal unity that any patriot has made, and his famous song *Hindustan Hamara* is the nearest thing to a non-controversial national anthem that we can hope to achieve for a long time. But his Islamic studies, which he pursued ceaselessly to the end of his days, tended to widen his horizon. His deep study of Muslim thought and culture gave his poetry a Muslim flavour, which robbed him of some of his readers in India. The conception of nationalism along territorial

lines, he found repugnant to his nature. Both in his poetry and in his conversation, he always quoted the example of Europe to illustrate the futility of dividing mankind into territorial compartments. He sought a cultural ideal, which should raise men above territorial or racial considerations, and which should give life a purpose and an aim ". And so, as correctly stated by Professor Bokhari, " with his death the Moslims lost an eloquent messenger, and one of the greatest interpreters of their religion ". Lastly, one of Iqbal's greatest admirers—Mr. Abdulla Anwar Beg—writes of the poet in his comprehensive work called *The Poet of the East* :—" He despised nationalism, and considered it extremely injurious to human evolution. He was the arch-priest of Pān-Islāmism. Iqbal looked upon nationalism as something dangerous, particularly to the solidarity of Islam. His strong religious sense compelled him to see things through Muslim eyes ".

#### IV

The materials and quotations brought together, in this chapter, will bring home to the mind of the unprejudiced reader the nature and tenor of the vast bulk of Iqbal's poetry. He had every right to constitute himself " the bard of Islam ", and no sensible critic can have any reasonable justification to carp and cavil at it. There are several similar examples in Hindi literature where eminent poets—occupying the highest position in the Hindi literary world—had constituted themselves champions of the cause of that aspect of Hinduism of which they themselves were votaries. To mention but two such examples, I would take two of the greatest Hindi poets—Soor Das and Tulsi Das. The former, who lived from 1483 to 1563, had left in his well-known collection, called *Soor Sagar*, a very large number of hymns in exaltation of the Krishna cult of Hinduism, which are justly regarded as perfect types of Hindi literary art, but which are nothing but religious poetry, pure and simple.

And Tulsi Das (who was born in 1532, and died in 1624 in the reign of Jahangir) is the author of a pretty large number of books, the most famous and popular of which, even now, is the *Ram Charit Manas*—popularly known as the *Ramayana*. This last (which was rendered into excellent English by Mr. F. T. Growse, of the Indian Civil Service) has been repeatedly described by qualified European scholars as a work of the highest literary art, and the most popular work in Hindi literature in the whole Hindi-speaking region in Northern India—as extensively familiar to the masses (in the tracts situated between the Bengalee-speaking area to the east and the Panjabee-speaking area to the west) as is the Bible amongst the corresponding classes in Britain. And yet Tulsi Das's *Ramayana* is a religious epic from beginning to end, which has sustained for now centuries the faith of the Hindi-speaking masses in the Hinduism of "the Rama cult".

These two instances—and they could easily be multiplied from examples in other literatures—go to show that religious poetry has played a very important part in almost every great literature, and it should not be regarded as a reproach to any poet that he had dedicated his talents to the exposition and popularisation of the religion he believed in. It is a great mistake, therefore, for any sensible person or impartial critic to feel aggrieved at the fact that a particular poet was the bard of Hinduism, or Islam, or Christianity, or any other faith which he followed. Not every poet can appeal universally to humanity, in general, and the larger number of poets must, in the nature of things, continue to interest in their works that section only to which they themselves belong, and with the feelings and sentiments of which they are familiar and in sympathy. If such a section be large; the poet, by writing his verses, does a service to the people, and merits appreciation by them. According to his expositors and interpreters, such was also the case

Iqbal. Thus the object of this chapter is not at all to find fault with Iqbal for having devoted himself to Islamic poetry, but to place that fact—on the authority of his sympathetic expounders—in the right perspective, so that it may be possible for the critic to make a just appraisal of Iqbal's place in the realm of poetry. No one claims Soor Das and Tulsi Das as anything but religious poets of Hinduism ; and there is nothing wrong if Iqbal was a religious poet of Islam. It is a wholly different thing to say that Iqbal was a poet of international renown to be compared with those who had contributed to what is called " world-literature ". That subject is discussed at some length in a later chapter. I shall also discuss, elsewhere in this book, the value of the poems of Iqbal on subjects relating to Indian nationalism—of which the most famous are the two known as *Hindustan Hamara* (" Our India "), and *Sach Kah Dun Aye Brahman* (" Shall I tell the Truth O Brahmin ")—and try to appraise them as contributions to the cause of nationalism in India.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### Some Samples of Iqbal's Sentiments.

"To know the vintage and quality of a wine one need not drink the whole cask".

— Persian proverb.

## II

Having discussed in the previous chapters not only Iqbal's backgrounds—religious, philosophic and political—but also the basic sentiment that impenetrated and inspired his poems, I may now place before the reader some samples of his poetry—with a view to testing and establishing the correctness of the views expressed in the preceding pages. It need hardly be added that the passages, quoted below, are only illustrative and by no means exhaustive, as, in the nature of things, it cannot be otherwise. Reference has been made in an earlier chapter to Iqbal's bitter hostility to western civilisation, culture, and political system. Here is a poem, which might justly be called Iqbal's "Warning to the West":—

Hejaz in silence has to anxious ears proclaimed  
That God's o'd compact with desert-dwellers shall be re-  
ordained.

The lion which sprang from the wilds and shattered  
Rome,

The angels say, shall be reborn in its old home.

Oh ye, who in Western lands reside, learn God's home is  
not a business concern :

The gold you think is pure soon shall impure turn.

A suicide's death awaits your civilisation ;

A slender bough to rest a nest is no safe position.

In angry seas, where storms and furies rage, the end  
shall ride.

Contemptible but safe in a frail leaf rose-leaf caravan it  
shall stride.

It is obvious that in democracy the poet had absolutely no faith. He condemned it in bitter terms. In *Zerbe-Kalim*, under the caption "Government of the People", he wrote :—

'A man from Europe has at last disclosed this secret.  
Though the wise prefer not to give it out.  
Democracy is a form of government in which  
Men are counted, not weighed.

Having thus no faith in democracy—that is in the rule by majority based on competition—Iqbal indulged in animadversions on it, of which the following is an example :—

"The democracy of the West is the same old organ,  
Which strikes the self-same note of Imperialism ;  
That which thou regard'st as the fairy Queen of  
Freedom,  
In reality is the demon of autocracy clothed in the garb  
of democracy,  
Legislation, reforms, concessions, rights and privileges,  
In the *materia medica* of the West are but sweet  
narcotics,  
The heated discussions of assemblies and conferences  
Are the *camouflage* of capitalists.  
Thou takest mere illusion for a garden,  
O thou fool ! a cage for the next ".

At another place he enjoins on his readers to

Run away from democracy and be the slave of the  
Perfect Man,  
For out of two hundred asses human wisdom cannot be  
derived.

Nor was the poet any the less hard on diplomacy in the international arena, which made him feel disgusted with it. He approached God to inform Him of the wonderful tricks of the Western politicians :



O God ! European politics seem to challenge Thy  
Wisdom,

Though its devotees are only the rich and the noble.  
Out of fire Thou hast created one Satan,  
Out of dust they have created ten thousand Satans.

Again, Iqbal summed up his condemnation of the western peoples in the following tirade :—

Amassing lore, thou hast lost thy heart to-day,  
Ah ! What a precious boon thou hast given away !

Steeped as he was in this view of the condition of the nations of the West, it is not surprising that Iqbal fell foul of the League of Nations, for as a Pan-Islamist—believing in the international fraternity of Islam rather in national patriotism—he could not bring himself to tolerate the ideal of the institution at Geneva. And so he ridiculed the very idea of a League of Nations, for to him only a League of Muslim peoples and not of Nations, could achieve, through love and understanding of one another, what would he enduring and helpful towards the achievement of eternal peace—at any rate, for the Muslim world. About the League of Nations at Geneva he wrote :—

Since a long time the sickly creature is brewing,  
I am afraid I may not utter the sad news.  
Though the end seems to be almost near,  
Its Christian devotees pray that it may survive !  
Perhaps this lean structure of European diplomacy,  
'Through the blessing of Satan may last for a time still.  
To the end that wars may cease on this old planet, the  
suffering  
Peoples of the world have founded a new institution.'  
So far as I can see, it amounts to this :  
A number of undertakers have formed a company to  
allot the graves.

Iqbal went further ; and indulged, in writing of the League not only in ridicule but even in invective :—

" Surely, the intellect of man can never be evolved out of

the united brain of a hundred donkeys ; and the League is but another outstanding instance of selfish designs and machinations of the Imperialistic nations to safeguard their own interests. The League is but an organisation of thieves for the distribution of shrouds, sitting in a grave-yard." That was the poet's verdict !

In *Bal-e-Jibreel* writing on Lenin, Iqbal said :—

In Europe there seems to be much light of knowledge  
and science,

But the fact is that her ocean contains no real water of  
human life.

In beauty of structure, grandeur and gaiety,  
Buildings of banks are much better than those of  
temples.

What is called trade is really a gamble,  
One man's profit causes loss to millions.

This knowledge, this science, this culture and govern-  
ment,

They suck the blood and give no message of equality.  
Unemployment, lethargy, nakedness and poverty,  
How great are the victories of European nationalism.

Iqbal believed that nationalism was but a cloak for the capitalists to play their game undetected. Hence he prayed :—

When will the ship of capitalism be sunk.

O God ! The world awaits the day of their punishment :

Iqbal fully distrusted the spread of modern European culture and civilisation among the Mussulmans, for the reason that :

" This new wine will weaken the mind still further ;  
This new light will only intensify the darkness ".

These are but a few samples of Iqbal's sociological ideas as expressed in his poems, and I forbear from quoting more. As an Indo-Muslim critic sums up the position justly :  
" Iqbal has no faith in modern democracy. It represents

to him nothing but the oppression of the poor by the rich, under the influence of commercialism. It is in fact slavery, and serves the selfish ends of the wealthy classes, the real rulers in the name of democracy". Now, is it all inspiring poetry, or political and economic propaganda of a rather morbid type? Is poetry expected to deal primarily with our emotions, or with the success or failure of democracy, or the League of Nations?

Iqbal's satirical pen would not spare one of the greatest German philosophers, Hegel, nor even those who are said to have cast their spell on his heart and mind. Of Hegel he writes that "he is a hen who by dint of enthusiasm laid eggs without association with any cock". Nietzsche also (with whose "will to power"—implying "the fullest possible realization of a complete self-reliant personality"—Iqbal is believed to have had much sympathy) is attacked by his acknowledged votary as the "madman in a European China-shop", because he was, in the poet's opinion, an atheist. Iqbal wrote of him thus :—

If song thou crave, flee from him,  
 Thunder roars in reed of his pen.  
 He plunged a lancet into Europe's heart ;  
 His hand is red with the blood of the Cross.  
 He reared a pagoda on the ruins of temple ;  
 His heart is a true believer's, but his brain is an  
 infidel's.

And so on and so forth ; there is a good deal more of the hot stuff about Nietzsche, which it is unnecessary to quote. But it is interesting to recall Iqbal's dictum about one of the greatest French philosophers, Bergson—the only modern European thinker, besides Nietzsche, who is believed to have influenced Iqbal. He renders Bergson's message thus :—

If thou wouldst read life as an open book,  
 Be not a spark divided from the brand,  
 Bring the familiar eye, the friendly look,  
 Nor visit strange-like thy native land,

O thou, by vain imagining befooled,  
Get thee a reason which the heart hath schooled.

. This may be a very imperfect statement of Bergson's system of philosophy, and it is not certainly complimentary to that great French thinker. It is nothing, however, compared to Iqbal's trouncing and traducing of Nietzsche. Still worse, does Einstein—the great physicist of international repute—fare, who is styled by Iqbal "the hierophant of lie, the descendant of Moses, or Aron, the one who revived the religion of Zoroaster", while Lenin—the arch-revolutionist of modern Russia, and the high priest of Bolshevism—is pooh-poohed on the ground that the Persian people have always exchanged one master for another—no matter, be he good, bad, or indifferent. "Shirin never lacks a lover", wrote Iqbal: "if it is not Khosrau, then it is Farhad". That is the verdict of Iqbal on Lenin—poetical perhaps, but not quite judicial, and poetical too for no other reason save its reference to the worn-out Persian symbolism concerning the pair of lovers—namely, Shirin and Farhad.

### III

It being the fashion for a modern poet to exhibit some leaning towards Socialism, the dialogue between "Comte and the Workman", the "Kismetnameh of the Capitalist and the Labourer", and the "Workman's Song", may be mentioned as samples of the poems that indicate Iqbal's socialistic ideas. I quote a stanza from the last-mentioned poem:—

Clad in cotton rags I toil as a slave for hire,  
To earn for an idle master his silk attiro;  
The Governor's ruby seal 'tis my sweat that buys,  
His horse is gemmed with tears from my children's eyes.

Though Iqbal firmly believed that only through Islam can man attain salvation, he seems to have found in

socialism the realisation of many of his dreams. In his poem "The Command of Allah," he wrote :—

Go and awaken the poor and the dispossessed of my  
Universe,  
And shake to the very foundations the palaces of the  
rich.  
Make the blood of the slave boil with the fire of faith,  
Let the tiny sparrow hurt itself against the mighty hawk,  
Declare that the ' Kingdom of People ' is coming fast,  
And obliterate the traces of all the age-old system.  
The fields that provide not the peasant with bread,  
Crush their crops and reduce them to dust.

In his poem, called "The Candle and the Poet", one finds Iqbal beginning to be influenced by socialism. Writing of the peasant, he apostrophises him thus :

" Knowest thou, O peasant, the essence of thy being ?  
Though are the grain, the field, the rain, and the  
harvest."

In the last stanza of the poem Iqbal foretells the Revolution :—

The birds will chirp at the cry of the fowler,  
The bud's garment will be dyed with the blood of flower-  
gatherer ;  
That which the eyes see, the lips cannot utter.  
Dumb-founded am I to think what the world is, and  
what it is to be.

In his "Zahur-i-Ajam"; Iqbal predicts again the Revolution, indignant at what he regards as the gross injustice of the capitalist system :—

The master is making pretty rubies out of the blood of  
the workman's veins.  
Through the tyranny of these lords of the soil,  
The fields of the peasants are all waste,  
Revolution ! Revolution ! O Revolution :

In another poem Iqbal hails the Soviet Revolution, and the new proletarian movement :—

Arise, for united humanity has now turned over a new leaf ;

And both in the East and the West, it is now the age of the workers ;

Make thine own world, if thou art alive,

For life is the secret of Adam ; the conscience of all true being.

In slavery life becomes a mere shallow stream ;

While in freedom, life is like the ocean, free and boundless.

A new sun has arisen from the womb of the earth,

O heaven ! for how long will you mourn the fate of fallen stars ?

In " Zarh-i-Kalim ", the poet's last collection of Urdu verses, there is a poem entitled *Gila* (" Complaint "), in which he gives expression to his burning conviction about the future of the peasantry in this country :—

Who knows the fate of India which is still but a bright Jewel in some Crown ;

The peasant is like a corpse dug out of his grave

Whose stinking shroud is still buried underground.

His (the peasant's) body and the soul are alike mortgaged to others,

It is a pity that neither the house nor the house-owner remains,

Thou hast (O peasant) reconciled thyself to slavery of the West.

I bear a grudge against thee, and not against the West.

That Iqbal's heart beat in unison with that of the poor peasant, and the oppressed labourer, who are deprived of the fruits of their labour, under the capitalist system, is a proposition which may unhesitatingly be accepted. So far so good. But the question remains whether poetry or prose is the proper medium for propagating socialism, communism, or any other "ism" ; and so also remains that of the effect and value of Iqbal's teachings on socialism, as a

whole. Those interested in this aspect of Iqbal's poems may study with advantage the instructive and searching criticism offered on it by Mr. W. C. Smith (in his highly informative work called *Modern Islam in India*, which is dealt with at some length in a later chapter of this work. I am concerned, at present, not with Iqbal's socialism but with his poetry; and dealing with the latter, I find that a great admirer of the poet — Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim (in his essay on "Rumi, Nietzsche and Iqbal", in the book called *Iqbal As A Thinker*)—expresses himself as follows :—

"In neither Urdu nor Persian is there a poet who could compare with Iqbal in variety of thought and wealth of imagery"; but a little later, he himself records that "some of Iqbal's contemporary poets, who are considered masters in their own art, did not consider him to be a poet in the true sense of that term. They contended that he turned his poetry into an instrument for teaching and propaganda, which did great harm to his position as a poet." That is a very valid objection; while those who have studied carefully Persian and Urdu literatures will not be prepared to endorse Dr. Hakim's hyperbolic statement, quoted above—about "variety of thought and wealth of imagery" in Iqbal's poetry being greater than that in any other poet. On the contrary, there is much force in the view, attributed to Iqbal's contemporaries among poets, in regard to the propagandist nature of his poetry.

Again :—Dr. Hakim himself rightly remarks later, in the course of his essay :— "Versification of philosophy does good neither to philosophy nor to poetry. Creation and rational systematization of thought with a view to drawing conclusions is not the business of poets." That is a correct estimate. Were it grasped by the indiscriminating admirers of Iqbal, it would be all to the good, for then they will appreciate what Dr. Hakim rightly affirms that "poetry is the language of the heart, not of the brain." Mr. Kalim-

ud-din Ahmad (of the Patna College)—in the course of his essay on "Iqbal's Conception of Art" in the same book—is precisely of the same opinion as that expressed by Dr. Hakim. He writes:—"The critical thoughts that Iqbal expresses are, unfortunately, not expressed in prose. Verse is not a suitable medium for the successful communication of criticism. When the medium used is verse, this unfortunate tendency becomes more pronounced. A glance at those poems in which Iqbal talks about art would be enough to show that the language used is not suitable for a scientific discussion. It does not lend itself to exactitude." Thus, the sum and substance of the discussion is that in using verse for expressing his views and ideas on subjects relating to Art, Philosophy, Sociology, or other scientific themes, Iqbal erred in his choice, since he would have succeeded in achieving his object in a much larger measure through prose—which, and not verse, is the proper medium for such a purpose.

In view of the no-impeachable data set forth above, I confess I am surprised that a scholar of the position and distinction of Mr. K. G. Saiyidain should have been betrayed into the language of flattery. When dealing with Iqbal's socialistic poems (in his essay on "Progressive Trends in Iqbal's Thought," in *Iqbal As A Thinker*, he exclaims:—"Is there any other poet or writer who has expressed with greater depth and sincerity of feeling the pulsating soul of Socialism, or his own courageous, uncompromising, sympathy with those whom an unjust and unhuman social order has always kept under repression?" Again:—"There is no poet or thinker of this age who has given expression to a deeper and more sincere faith in the unlimited potentialities of man and his great future. Iqbal is essentially a prophet of optimism and power". Now I confess I feel diffident in joining issue with Mr. Saiyidain; but I shall be on safe ground in



asserting that what Karl Marx—the founder, originator, and the greatest expounder of socialism—did not know of it was not worth knowing. Writing of the English poets, who were regarded in his days as having been inspired by socialistic ideas, this is what Marx wrote when instituting a comparison between Byron and Shelley, as poets of socialism.—“Those who understand them rejoice that Byron died at 36, because if he had lived he would have become a re-actionary bourgeois ; they grieve that Shelley died at 29, because he was a revolutionist ; and he would always have been one of the advanced guards of socialism.”

#### IV

Is Marx's estimate of Shelley as a poet of socialism, incorrect or unwarranted ? And can it be seriously urged by any impartial critic of the works of Shelley and Iqbal that the latter is superior to the former in expressing with “depth and sincerity the pulsating soul of socialism”, or that Iqbal is greater than Shelley in giving expression to “the unlimited potentialities of man and his great future” ? Having studied carefully both Shelley and Iqbal, I feel justified in maintaining that compared with Iqbal's socialistic poetry—some samples of which are quoted above—surely it was Shelley who wrote genuine poetry, on the same subject, long before Iqbal, who offers us but a pale imitation of the Master's famous “Song to the Men of England.” It may be, therefore, useful to contrast at this stage the advanced views of that greatest English lyricist—as expounded in an article on Shelley by Dr. Consins—with those of Iqbal on what the latter called “the Kingdom of People.” We get a glimpse of Shelley's life-long quarrel with society, as then organised, in the dedication of *The Revolt of Islam* to his wife, Mary Godwin :

But one echo from a world of woes,  
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and foes ;

I grow weary to behold.  
 The selfish and the strong still tyrannise  
 Without reproach of check.

*Queen Mab* represents an elaborate indictment of society, and in the opening part of the poem Shelley presents, in most forceful terms, his views, in language which cannot be excelled :—

Power like a desolating pestilence,  
 Pollutes whatever it touches ; and obedience,  
 Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,  
 Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame  
 A mechanised machine.

Take again, the lines in the same poem, displaying the intense craving for freedom by the abandonment of selfishness, and the attainment of unity :

Yet human spirit, bravely hold thy course.  
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue  
 The gradual paths of an aspiring change :  
 For birth, and life, and death, and that strange state  
 Before the naked soul has found its home,  
 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge  
 The restless wheels of being on their way,  
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,  
 Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal.

Thus Shelley's fight for freedom from all unreasonable restraint was a burning passion that brought him into conflict with the repressive and irksome laws of his time. At the age of twenty-three he wrote *Alastor*, which was a forerunner of his first orderly and full presentation of the rebellion against society—*The Revolt of Islam*. In this masterpiece of intellectual brilliance he unfolded his vision of the "two powers" that hold sway over the mortal world—the Spirit of Good, symbolised as an eagle, and the Spirit of Evil, symbolised as a snake :

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive  
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,

Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive :  
 And in each bosom of the multitude  
 Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood  
 Wage silent war ; when priests and kings dissemble,  
 When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble  
 The snake and eagle meet—the world's foundation  
 tremble.

It is thus that the eternal struggle between Right and Wrong in the universe—due to human failings and limitations—must be faced. Shelley saw this greatest enemy of humanity in all its phases, and arrayed against it spiritual forces in his wonderfully-wrought-out poem, which may justly be claimed as the first word of the thesis of modern socialism. He thus taught that there can be no peace on earth until the fundamental unity of mankind, and its consequential result of peace and goodwill, is achieved. He emphasised the psychological truth that a wrong done to another is a wrong not so much to him as to one's own highest nature. "Can man be free if woman be slave ?", he asks, and declares, in view of the subjugation of womanhood, that—

Never shall peace and human nature meet,  
 Till free and equal man and woman greet  
 Domestic peace.

Shelley's supreme utterance, *Prometheus Unbound*, a colossal work of imagination, is fired with tremendous spiritual enthusiasm. Underlying the whole machinery of mythological incident there stands in bold relief the central idea of a struggle between slavery and freedom, and the ultimate free comradeship of humanity out of the exploitation of men and women by men and women, until there will appear :

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,  
 Whose nature is its own divine control,  
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea,

Surely to the worker in the cause of the advancement of oppressed or suppressed humanity there could be no more inspiring ideal—as justly emphasised by Dr. Cousins—than that propounded by Shelley in his philosophic poems, from which but a few short extracts are given above, to illustrate the tremendous difference in the treatment of socialistic ideals by Shelley and by Iqbal. The contrast in the treatment of the subject by the two poets is so marked that he who runs may read.

## V

It may also be noted that perhaps no poet—whether of the East or the West—has been so vehemently offensive in denouncing those from whom he has differed, or things he did not like or approve of, as is Iqbal. The subsequently cancelled-out lines about Hafiz, the passages quoted above about Hegel and the other philosophers, as also about western civilisation and institutions, in general, are marked with so much acerbity, and characterised by such bitterness, as to leave an acrid taste in the mouth. Other philosophic poets have addressed themselves to similar task, but their verses are seldom lacking in sweet reasonableness as are those of Iqbal.

But unduly severe, and not infrequently unjust, as are *Iqbal's judgments on the West*, it is interesting to find that he had a soft corner in his heart for Britain—though it is by no means easy to appreciate the ground for this marked differentiation between the British and the other western nations,

An Eastern tasted once the wine in Europe's glass,  
No wonder if he broke old vows in reckless glee,  
The blood came surging up in veins of his new-born  
thought.

Predestination's bond slave, he learnt that man is free.  
Let not thy soul be vexed with the drunkard's noise and  
rout ?

O Saqi, tell me fairly who 'twas that broke this jar .

The scent of the rose showed first the way into the garden.

Else how should the nightingale have known that roses are ?

## VI

I shall not quote further from Iqbal's works to indicate his teachings in sociological philosophy, as expressed in his poems, but content myself by quoting the summing-up by so high an authority as Dr. Nicholson—the translator of his most important poem, *Asrar-e Khudi* :—“ A free and independent Muslim fraternity, having the Kaaba as its centre, and knit together by the love of Allah and devotion to the Prophet, such is Iqbal's ideal ”. That puts clearly in a few simple words Iqbal's ideal and aspirations as a poet and teacher. But that does not seem to have satisfied Dr. Nicholson, who went on to say :—“ It is less clear, however, why Iqbal identifies his ideal society with Mohammad's conception of Islam, or why membership of that society should be a privilege reserved for Muslims ? Here the religious enthusiast seems to have knocked out the philosopher ”. It is not surprising that a British critic, like Dr. Nicholson, should have failed to appreciate Iqbal's position. But Mr. Riazul Hasan, as an Indian interpreter of Iqbal, has no such difficulties, and correctly expounds the poet's views, when he says :—“ Iqbal sees the attainment of his ideal possible in the society of Islam. According to him the real perfection of the human ego, and the sound relationship between the individual and society can be established only under the regime of Islam, as the bond of union between the individual and society in Islam is not based upon the limited conception of race or land, but upon the universal faith of risalat and touheed—(the prophethood of Muhammad, and the oneness of God). The individual has been endowed with perfect freedom only under Islam,

which has based itself upon freedom, liberty, and brotherhood in their true senses". Thus unless theological dogmatism be held to be philosophic, it may safely be asserted that Iqbal's philosophic conceptions were influenced mainly by Dogmatics. As rightly put by another writer—Mr. Akbar Ali—in his *Iqbal : His Poetry and Message* :—

" According to the poet, Islamic brotherhood is the ideal type of society. Iqbal's note is not the note of an individual, it is rather the whole mind of Islamic polity. The objects that inspire him always create in him moods, associations and suggestions, that are all connected with Islam and Muslim culture ". It is thus clear from the statements of the interpreters of Iqbal that there was hardly any room in his system for anything unconnected with dogmatics. It would be idle to labour the point, since the poet himself had put it in one of his poems :—

Though I have been brought up in the temple of idols,  
My lips have uttered what is within the heart of  
Ka'aba.

Iqbal evidently wrote the above in consciousness of his Brahmin ancestry, and their conversion to Islam.

## VII

*Armughan-e-Hejaz*—a posthumous work of Iqbal—is a passionate revolt against the civilisation of the West. The poems it contains are partly in Persian, and partly in Urdu; the Persian portion covering a much larger number of pages. The subjects dealt with are the irreligiousness of the present age, the orthodoxy of the Brahmin, the artificial life of modern women, the political slavery of the people of India, in general, and of the Indian Mussalmans, in particular, the abdication of King Edward VIII, and also such abstract themes as death, egoism, the doctrine of free-will, and some others of the same variety. A poem on the conference of Satan's confederates discusses the weak points of the present-day Indian Muslims, in the course of

which Mullas come in, as usual, for an exceedingly harsh treatment, at the hands of the poet. This last work of Iqbal's excels the others in his strong belief in the greatness of his religious conceptions. In his previous works Iqbal had vehemently condemned western civilisation. But he reaches his climax in this work when he says that even hell would be a better place to live in because " it is free from the fetters of the tricky shopkeepers of the West " ! And so, from first to last, it is the same old story : down with every one and every thing, with whom, or with which, the poet is not in sympathy, by reason of his prepossessions in favour of a system—cultural, political, religious, or philosophical—in which he lived and moved and had his being. Such being the case, there is nothing surprising in Iqbal's muse being, to a very large extent, cribbed, cabined and confined, and lacking withal in the note of genuine universalism. That his poetry appeals to a fairly large section of educated Indian Muslims may safely be accepted, but it is not less safe to say that it does not interest other large sections of readers in India, by reason of its being not adequately broad-minded. Much of it appears to the non-Muslim readers, prosaic and propagandist rather than emotional and inspiring.

Lastly, as regards Iqbal's " message " to humanity the following lines from *Javid Nam*, translated into English by the poet himself, may be taken as typical of his views on his *summum bonum* of human life, as preached by him in his philosophic poems :—

Art thou in the stage of " life ", " death " or " death-in-life "

Invoke the aid of three witnesses to verify the  
" station " ;

- The first witness is thine own consciousness,
- The second witness is the consciousness of another Ego,
- The third witness is God's consciousness ;

See thyself, then, with God's light.

If thou standest unshaken in front of this light,

Consider thyself as living and eternal as He.

That man alone is real, who dares to see God face to face.

The above lines—in the vigorous rendering into English by the poet himself—contain (in the opinions of sympathetic but qualified critics) the quintessence of Iqbal's message. "It lay" (in the words of an admirer of the poet) "in his passionate insistence on man's efforts for a loftier world, pervaded by Islamic love and brotherhood amongst mankind,—self-developed, strong but disciplined, and true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home. In other words, he wanted man to be true, active and strenuous." There is not only nothing to object to in this noble ideal; but much to recommend it, especially to the youth of this country. But is there anything in it so original, so striking, and so unique, as to justify the uncritical laudation (quoted in an earlier chapter) that "Iqbal is the greatest thinker produced by the Muslim world during the last thousand years"? Those who are prepared to accept such an intensely high pitched statement as correct must possess but little acquaintance with the ideals and thoughts of the Muslim thinkers and poets in lands outside India; while students of English and American poetical literature will find it impossible to bring themselves to accept, as a fair estimate, the claim set up for Iqbal by his undiscerning votaries. To institute comparison between one English poet (Browning) and Iqbal, any unbiassed critic but will declare that in giving expression to "a deeper and more sincere faith in the unlimited potentialities of man and his great future," in fact as "essentially a prophet of optimism and power", it is Browning who stands supreme amongst the galaxy of the world's poets—as a teacher of strenuous life, of constant struggle for a better, higher, and nobler



existence, and of the tremendous moral worth of human effort in achieving the end in view :—

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break ;

Never dreamed, though right was worsted, wrong would triumph ;

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### The Literary Value of Iqbal's Persian Poetry.

" Good and chaste Persian has very rarely been produced, or admired, in Hindustan; where we find a Baboo Persian, precisely similar to Baboo English ".

—Prof. Browne (*Literary History of Persia*).

" Our regret can only be that he (Iqbal) forsook Urdu for Persian."

—Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (*Cultural History of India*)

" No noble work of imagination was ever composed by any man except in a dialect which he had learnt without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had analysed its structure. Romans of great abilities wrote Greek verses, but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems, but none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second ".

—Macanlay (*Essay On " Frederic the Great "*.)

## II

I shall now deal with Iqbal's poetical works which he composed in Persian. His assiduous studies in the language of Persia (now Iran), and the literature enshrined in it, had fostered in him such a love of them that it was bound to appear markedly in his works. He persuaded himself to believe early in his career that Urdu was not a sufficiently developed language to be made the vehicle for the exposition of his philosophy; he felt also that he had to appeal to a larger section of Muslims outside India, and not only to the Muslims of India. So, while continuing to write occasionally in Urdu for the behoof mainly of his Indian co-religionists, he adopted Persian for expressing his philosophical views to the Muslims abroad. But " unfortunately for a number of his countrymen, a great deal of the

best of Iqbal is in Persian"—wrote Professor Bokhari—"and only one of his long poems, "The Secrets of Self," translated by Professor Nicholson) is available in English". As a matter of fact, few of Iqbal's longer poems are in Urdu. And so the net result of his composing poems mostly in Persian, in preference to Urdu, was to deprive not only the Hindoos but also an overwhelmingly large sections of Muslims, throughout India, of the opportunity of assessing their true worth, since now-a-days but a very small number of the latter know enough Persian to be able to appreciate Iqbal's poems

"I shall not venture to express any opinion on the purity of Iqbal's style as a writer of Persian. That judgment must be left to those who claim Persian as their mother tongue", wrote the Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru—himself a great scholar of the language and literature of Iran. But if what he laid down be accepted as the correct criterion, it would be impossible, except for an Iranian, to assess the value of the vast bulk of Iqbal's poetical works, that are in Persian, at their intrinsic worth. After all, poetry has to be judged—unlike a work of information, whether in prose or verse—by not only what it says, but how it says it. What is said, and the way it is said, are the two cardinal factors in poetry worth the name; but of those two essential requisites, the second is by far the more important for poetry, in general, and for philosophic or didactic poetry, in particular. Poetry has to be appreciated by the radiance of its vision, and not by the encyclopaedic range of science or philosophy enshrined in it. In other words, poetry should be judged by the standard of its imparting genuine inspiration to the soul, and not by its merely conveying information to the mind. Sir Tej Bahadur's criterion makes the task of assessing Iqbal's Persian poems impossible for a non-Iranian; but undoubtedly he is right.

## III

It is a fact, however, that nowhere—except at one place, and there too covering barely four lines, devoted to Khusrau—in the four big volumes of the late Professor Browne's monumental work on the literary history of Persia (either in the text covering more than two thousand large-sized pages, or in the closely-printed, two-hundred-and-sixty-columned indices) does the name of a single Indian poet, writing in Persian, find a place—except of Khusrau, mentioned above. I would quote *all* that Professor Browne says about that famous Indian poet:—"Amir Khusrau, of Delhi, whose reputation might appear to entitle him to notice, was born at Patiyali, in A. D. 1253, died at Delhi in A. D. 1325, and worked chiefly on the lines of Nidhami of Ganja". In other words, Khusrau—not unjustly regarded as the greatest Indo-Persian poet—was at best an imitator of the famous Persian poet, Nidhami of Ganja, one of the greatest mystic poets who have written in Persian. Professor Browne explains why he adopted the principle that India should be excluded from the scope of his book and asserts that "absurd exaggerations, recondite words, vain epithets, far-fetched comparisons, and tasteless bombast, represent to perfection, the worst style of those florid writers who flourished under the patronage of the Timurids in North-Eastern Persia and Transoxiana, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of our era, and who, unfortunately, passing with Bahar into India, became models and exemplars to the bombast-loving people of that country. This is one, and perhaps the chief, reason why good and chaste Persian has very rarely been produced or admired in Hindustan, where we find a 'Baboo Persian', precisely similar to the 'Baboo English' which in the immortal pages of the *Biography of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Onoocool Chunder Mookerjee* has afforded us much exquisite material for mirth. Persian literature produced in India

has not, as a rule, the real Persian flavour, which belongs to the indigenous product ”.

Professor Browne's adverse judgment on Indo-Persian literature, is confirmed, to some extent, by Professor Hahib in his *Life of Khusrau*, as follows :—” In their attempt to imitate or rival their predecessors, Indo-Persian poets have endowed their productions with an artificiality and verbosity, which can only be admired by readers who have never tasted better fare”. And, similarly, Dr. Wahid Mirza, in his *Study of Khusrau*, refers to the same subject in the following terms :—” Persian poetry, produced in India, has always been looked upon by modern scholars with mild contempt”. That seems to be an undeniable fact, though the view so held may not be justifiable, altogether. Again, Dr. Wahid Mirza writes appositely in the same connection : ” Ghalib, the great poet of Delhi, whose fame to-day rests almost entirely on his small *diwan* (collection) of Hindustani, or Urdu, poetry attached a much greater importance to his Persian poetry which few Indians read to-day. ” Look at my Persian verses”, he says, ” if you want to see multi-coloured images; and leave aside my Urdu collection, for it is devoid of my true colour”. That was Ghalib's own estimate of his Persian poems, in comparison with those he had composed in Urdu. But how many persons in India read, or even know anything of the Persian *diwan* of Ghalib, whose name as a poet is now cherished solely because of his Urdu *diwan* which is justly held in high esteem, while his much-belauded-by-himself Persian poems have long since fallen into oblivion.

All these facts point a useful moral, on the basis of which the first question that would naturally strike one is whether Iqbal is likely to be luckier in this respect than the dozens and scores—if not hundreds—of his talented Indian predecessors, including Ghalib? I am extremely doubtful—on the facts before me—if any historian of

Persian literature, will care to include the name of any Indian, or any non-Iranian, in its galaxy of Persian poets, or even of prose-writers. Nor should it be at all surprising; for though good prose may be written by even a foreigner, if he be duly qualified for his task—and there are some examples of it in literary history, the latest being that of Joseph Conrad, a Pole, as an English novelist—a good poetry in any language can be composed only by a native to the manner born; otherwise, it is not likely to be reckoned by qualified critics as worthy of being literature worth the name—a fact borne out by Macaulay in the passage taken as a motto to this chapter. Is Mrs Sarojini Naidu mentioned in any history of contemporary English Literature? A few of her poems have appeared in an anthology of English poetry called the *Oxford Book of Mystic Verse*. But has any historian of twentieth-century English Literature even casually referred to her poems? Mrs. Naidu, and other Indian poets in English, had been relegated, in some recent histories of English Literature to a separate chapter, usually headed "Indo-Anglian Literature", a fact which by itself is highly significant.

#### IV

I am aware that an Indo-Muslim scholar—Professor Abdul Ghani—has written a bulky work, in three volumes, the object of which is to prove that the Persian literature produced in India, both in the pre-Mughal and the Mughal periods, is not only quite as good as, but even superior to, that produced in Persia itself. But he frankly admits that his view is not supported by Professor Browne, or by any other eminent Persian scholar or historian. In fact, Professor Ghani himself quotes in his book the text of a letter written by Professor Browne, in 1923 to the Government of the Central Provinces—in connection with the extension of the stipend of Professor Ghani who was then a scholar at Cambridge—in which that distinguished historian of

Persian Literature wrote that "Professor Abdol Ghani appears to cling to what I regard as a delusion that Indian Persian is better than Persian Persian." I am not aware that the views adhered to then, and propounded since by Professor Ghani, in his work mentioned above, have received the assent of any qualified scholar in Europe or Persia. On a question like this the opinion of Persian scholars is, for obvious reasons, entitled to the highest respect and it should be held to be conclusive, if it be (as we find it is) supported by a European scholar of international fame, like Professor Browne, whose *Literary History of Persia* is justly regarded as an authoritative and a standard work ; in fact, a classic on its theme, which is not likely to be superseded for a long time to come.

On these grounds, and in view of Sir Tej Bahadur's dictum, quoted above, and my having no pretensions to scholarship in Persian, I would leave it to the reader to form his own estimate of the literary value of Iqbal's poetry composed in the Iranian language, in the light of the materials brought together in this chapter. In a later chapter I shall discuss the effect and result on the reading public of Iqbal's having written the vast bulk of his poetical works in Persian rather than in Urdu, and the prospects of its being studied by future generations either in India, or in other Persian-knowing countries. But one thing is clear ; and it is that the Persian poems of Iqbal—constituting as they do the vast bulk of his poetical works—are almost all didactic, dealing with philosophical and theological themes, and are in no sense emotional or inspiring. This important aspect is discussed at some length in other chapters of this book

## V

This discussion on Iqbal's choice of Persian as his medium for composing the vast bulk of his poems, and the general failure of Indian writers in that language is

produce high-class literature, may seem open to two objections from the indiscriminating admirers of Iqbal :— that the criticism refers to Indo-Persian poetry generally, and not specially to that of Iqbal ; and that it is based on the verdict of a foreign authority (Professor Browne), though he is supported by the concurrent opinions of two qualified Indo-Muslim scholars, Professor Habib and Dr. Wahid Mirza. Nevertheless some enthusiastic but undiscerning admirers of Iqbal would not perhaps hesitate even to go the length of maintaining that the poet had succeeded where even Amir Khusrau, Abul Fazl, Faizi, and all the other famous Indo-Persian writers (including Ghalib) had been declared by competent critics to have failed. Also, while no scholar worth the name would dare to do so, some votaries of Iqbal would be ready even to differ from—if not to pooh pooh—Prof. Browne's opinion as that of an ' Imperialist ' and a ' foreigner ' and, as such, not entitled to acceptance. In fact, one of the favourite themes of the class I have in mind is precisely how Iqbal is misunderstood and misinterpreted by western scholars generally on matters relating to Islamic conceptions and ideals, as expressed by the poet. Obviously the force of any such contention would be considerably increased if the views of some competent Iranian scholars — that is, Iranian by birth and nationality — could be adduced indicating a favourable reception of Iqbal's poetry in Iran itself. The burden of proof, in this matter, clearly rests on those who maintain that Iqbal had been successful as a poet in his Iranian verses. But apparently the answer to the question as to what kind of reception Iqbal had got in Iran is that, to the best of our knowledge, he had got no reception at all in that country. If I am wrong then it is the opponents of the view expressed by me who should discharge the onus placed on them. I submit that on the materials available to us, the verdict should be in my favour, and against the devotees of the poet. But the matter does not



rest on deductions and inferences alone ; but is not concluded by authority.

Fortunately, for impartial critics, the arrival of the Iranian Cultural Mission in India, early in 1944, and the opinions expressed by its leader, and also by another member of the party, on the subject under discussion—namely, the position of Iqbal, as a poet, in Iranian literary circles—threw considerable light on the question. The leader of the Mission, His Excellency Ali Asghar Hikmat, was not only a distinguished scholar and thinker, but an ex-Minister of Education ; while Professor Ibrahim Pour Daoud was himself a renowned poet of Iran, occupying a position in the front rank of the galaxy of contemporary Iranian poets, besides being an eminent *savant*. On their arrival at Delhi—in March, 1944—both of them were asked, by some press representatives, to express their opinion about Iqbal. The leader of the Cultural Mission is said to have declared himself in reply to the question, at a Press Conference, as follows :—"Iqbal is not widely known in Iran. His name is confined to a few literary circles. On the contrary, Tagore is known all over the country ". Asked to explain how it was that Iqbal, who had written in Iranian, was unknown in Iran, except in "a few literary circles", while Tagore, who had written in Bengalee and English, was declared by him to have been known "all over the country ", His Excellency gave the following explanation :—"Tagore was the best known in Iran. This was helped by two factors : firstly, Tagore's works had been translated into English, and Tagore himself was a great writer in that language, which under present conditions, was the only medium of the exchange of ideas, and his works had, therefore, been translated into Iranian, and widely read ; secondly, Tagore had paid a visit to Iran, and was thus a living influence with those who had met him ". This was the opinion of the leader of the Iranian Cultural Mission to India, and there is absolutely

was a remarkably strange phenomenon in the controversy raised by the Aligarh signatories—that they should not have been able to obtain, as a co-signatory in support of their manifesto, the name of a single professor or lecturer of Persian at the University. This very serious omission naturally detracts, to a very large extent, from the weight that they would ask us to attach to their statement. Before turning to the substance of their complaint against the view expressed by Professor Pouré Daoud, it may also be added that his ten Indian critics categorically state that he “is undoubtedly Persia’s first-rate poet”, and “writes first-class poetry”. Surely, this should be regarded as a good and sound credential in an Iranian critic of an Indian poet, who had written in the foreign idiom of Iran—rather than a disqualification. But the critics of Professor Pouré Daoud did not state the inference they would like us to draw from their own testimony that the Iranian critic of Iqbal was himself “undoubtedly Persia’s first-rate poet”, who “writes first class poetry”.

I shall now set forth categorically, and in their own words, the various grounds urged by the ten Professors and lecturers of the Aligarh University as to why they regarded Professor Daoud’s remark about Iqbal being “only a local poet”, as “uncharitable”—to use their own expression. These grounds are:— (a) that Professor Daoud “exhibits strong Zoroastrian tendencies”, and “has rendered great service to Zoroastrianism”, by having translated its scriptures into Iranian; (b) that “he is a staunch supporter of the ‘purist’ movement, which seeks to purify Iranian life and literature of all Arab influence, and discards the use of Arabic words in his poems”; and (c) that “he is intensely national, and seeks to re-establish the old pre-Islamic culture of Iran”, and “to wipe away all Arab influence.” Lastly, there is a fourth ground, that “not satisfied with the highest glorification of the pre-

no reason why it should not be accepted as an impartial and unprejudiced factual statement on the position of Iqbal, in Iran, as a writer of Persian poems. At any rate—except the opinion of Professor Ibrahim Poure Daoud, to which I shall refer presently—the Cultural Mission leader's view, as quoted above, is the only material available to us on the subject under discussion—namely, the position of Iqbal, as a poet in the Persian language, in cultured and literary circles in Iran.

## VI

Professor Poure Daoud also expressed his opinion, at the Press Conference, at Delhi, about Iqbal and Tagore. He summed up his view tersely as follows:—“Iqbal was only a local poet, while Tagore was a great personage.” Put in that categorical form, the declaration of Professor Daoud had evidently given a rude shock to some of the Indian votaries of Iqbal, and a lengthy protest signed by ten members of the staff of the Muslim University, at Aligarh, had appeared in the press, setting forth the grounds on which the opinion expressed by Professor Daoud was regarded by the signatories to that statement as an aspersion on Iqbal, as a poet in the Persian language. Before dealing with these grounds, I may remark that at no place in the course of their long statement was there a single word against the views expressed by the leader of the Cultural Mission, which have been quoted above; and which had not been challenged or impeached either by the Aligarh educationists, or by any one else. The only other observation I shall permit myself to make is that it is strange that while six of the signatories to the protest were teachers of various Sciences, and one each of History, Philosophy, Arabic, and English, it is highly significant that the names of the professors and lecturers in the department of the Persian language, at the Aligarh University, were conspicuous by their absence. That, indeed,

was a remarkably strange phenomenon in the controversy raised by the Aligarh signatories—that they should not have been able to obtain, as a co-signatory in support of their manifesto, the name of a single professor or lecturer of Persian at the University. This very serious omission naturally detracts, to a very large extent, from the weight that they would ask us to attach to their statement. Before turning to the substance of their complaint against the view expressed by Professor Pouré Daoud, it may also be added that his ten Indian critics categorically state that he “is undoubtedly Persia’s first-rate poet”, and “writes first-class poetry”. Surely, this should be regarded as a good and sound credential in an Iranian critic of an Indian poet, who had written in the foreign idiom of Iran—rather than a disqualification. But the critics of Professor Pouré Daoud did not state the inference they would like us to draw from their own testimony that the Iranian critic of Iqbal was himself “undoubtedly Persia’s first-rate poet”, who “writes first class poetry”.

I shall now set forth categorically, and in their own words, the various grounds urged by the ten Professors and lecturers of the Aligarh University as to why they regarded Professor Daoud’s remark about Iqbal being “only a local poet”, as “uncharitable”—to use their own expression. These grounds are:— (a) that Professor Daoud “exhibits strong Zoroastrian tendencies”, and “has rendered great service to Zoroastrianism”, by having translated its scriptures into Iranian; (b) that “he is a staunch supporter of the ‘purist’ movement, which seeks to purify Iranian life and literature of all Arab influence, and discards the use of Arabic words in his poems”; and (c) that “he is intensely national, and seeks to re-establish the old pre-Islamic culture of Iran”, and “to wipe away all Arab influence.” Lastly, there is a fourth ground, that “not satisfied with the highest glorification of the pre-

Islamic culture and religion of Iran, he (Professor Daoud) comes out with a venomous poem on Polygamy, in which (under the caption of "The Greatest Sin") he vehemently condemns that institution. He can scarcely hold himself, and says that a polygamist is an enemy and "an assassin of the culture of our time". Evidently the Aligarh critics of Professor Daoud had not read carefully the treatment of the same subject in that famous book—Dr. Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam*—or they would not have condemned so strongly Professor Daoud for his views on Polygamy. The reader of this book can easily form his own opinion as to what extent, if any, the four grounds set forth above can justify a verdict that by reason of them Professor Daoud was disqualified from being regarded as an impartial and unprejudiced critic of Iqbal. The signatories to the Aligarh manifesto seem to think, however, that this grounds stated by them amount to a positive disqualification on the part of Professor Daoud for being regarded as an impartial or unprejudiced critic of Iqbal. And they state their conviction that by reason of them "his genius and ideas are in sharp conflict with those of Iqbal", and he cannot be, therefore, credited with the capacity "to appreciate" (Iqbal), as they show "his anxiety and enthusiasm to denounce" the Indian poet, whom the Aligarh protestants declare that they "honour as the greatest modern poet of Islam".

## VII

It is for readers of this book to form their own judgment whether for a distinguished Iranian poet and scholarly critic like Professor Daoud to have said that Iqbal "was only a local poet"—in the sense that his reputation was still confined to India, and had not extended to Iran—is to betray any incapacity to appreciate the Indian poet, or any "anxiety and enthusiasm to denounce" Iqbal, as alleged by his Aligarh critics. It seems to me but one

more instance of the extreme super-sensitiveness of the indiscriminating admirers of Iqbal. Howsoever that be, and even assuming that Professor Daoud's views may be rejected on the ground urged against him by his Aligarh critics, the verdict of His Excellency Ali Asghar Hikmat, the leader of the Iranian Cultural Mission, remains absolutely unchallenged that " Iqbal is not widely known in Iran " and " his name is confined to a few literary circles ". Thus the reader can form his own opinion on the literary value and popularity of Iqbal's Persian poetry, in Iran, on the testimony of the distinguished leader of the Iranian Cultural Mission to India, against whom absolutely nothing had been alleged by any votary of Iqbal. I submit, therefore, that even rejecting the opinion of Professor Daoud, there remains enough unimpeachable material on which one may justifiably hold that Iqbal's poems in Persian had failed till now to obtain wide appreciation and circulation in Iran, except (to quote His Excellency Hikmat again) " in a few literary circles ". Far from being challenged, or sought to be controverted, his statement is practically accepted as correct by the Aligarh protestants themselves, who in the concluding part of their manifesto express a hope that " some well-to-do admirer of Iqbal will donate a few thousand rupees to enable the trustees of Iqbal's publications to present, for free distribution, in Iran, Iqbal's poems in Persian." Any lengthy comment on it would be an act of supererogation, for if only by a free distribution of his poems in Persian, Iqbal can become popular in Iran, surely his popularity must be limited, at present to "a few literary circles " only, as stated by His Excellency Ali Asghar Hikmat.

This discussion may be concluded in the light of the materials made available by Dr. M. Ishaque in his recently-issued Modern Persian Poetry, in which the author has presented an instructive sketch of the Iranian poets, of the

twentieth century. One is not surprised to find that in the fairly comprehensive index to the book the name of Iqbal does not appear, but one is likely to be more than surprised to find in it the name of an Indian, who is described by Dr. Ishaque as "the herald of the new race of Persian poets". He was one Sayyid Muhammad, better known by his *takhalus* (pen-name as Adib Peshawari—since he was an Indian, who was born at Peshawar, in 1845, and died at Tehran, in 1930—who is described in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (vol. 3, p. 1064 as "the greatest of the modern poets", of Iran. As a native of India his mother tongue was not Persian but Pushto. To him, as to Iqbal, Persian was an acquired tongue. But in spite of it, we are told by Dr. Ishaque, that Adib Peshawari, who was "but a refugee", "struck a new note in his sentiments for Iran" and "ushered in a new epoch in the history of Persian poetry". But though this Pushto-speaking Indian Pathan from Peshawar was the founder of literary renaissance in modern Iran, and had "identified himself with Iran and her people, he never forgot India, the land of his birth". That is much to his credit; and the high position achieved by him as the founder of modern Persian poetry is, indeed, significant and suggestive. If a native of Peshawar, with Pushto as his mother-tongue, could achieve such a signal success and distinction in the literature of modern Iran, why could not Iqbal, a native of Sialkot, and with Panjabee as his mother-tongue, equally do the same? The only convincing reply is that Iqbal failed where Adib succeeded because, unlike the North-West Frontier Pathan, the Panjabee poet was wholly out of tune with almost everything for which modern Iran stands, and for which modern Iranians care—intense nationalism, keen interest in patriotic themes, demand for simplicity in style, and a complete purge of Arabic influence in Iranian vocabulary, literature, and

culture. Hence it was why Adib succeeded, and Iqbal failed, in capturing the ear of the modern Iranian. Had the signatories to the Aligarh manifesto but carefully studied Dr. Ishaque's hook, they would have appreciated the fact that the allegations they had made against Professor Ponre Daoud were almost equally applicable to all other contemporary Iranian poets, and were not the special characteristics of Professor Daoud alone, as they seem to have thought and suggested. To recapitulate and sum up : It is submitted that there is no reliable data on the basis of which it may be held that Iqbal had succeeded as a writer of verse in Persian, in securing any appreciation and popularity in Iran, beyond " a few literary circles".

That the statements of the leader of the Iranian Cultural Mission to India, and of Professor Ponre Daoud (to the effect that Iqbal's poems in the language of Iran were practically unknown in their country) were absolutely correct, was conclusively proved by the receipt, in India, of a Reuter's message (cabled from Tehran in April, 1945) worded as follows : " For the first time ' Iqbal Day' was celebrated in Tehran in commemoration of the death of the great Indian poet and philosopher, Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Under the auspices of the Indo-Iranian Cultural Society a public meeting was held in the Archaeological Museum of Iran, attended by many Indians and Iranians". The opening words of the message—" for the first time"—clearly establish that until April, 1945, not even Tehran (the capital of Iran, and the centre of Iranian culture) had held any celebration, or demonstration, such as had been now held under the auspices of the Indo-Iranian Cultural Society. This fact, coupled with what I have set forth in this chapter, proves to the hilt the correctness of the contention of the members of the Iranian Cultural Mission that, as a poet in Persian, Iqbal was still unknown in



their country. Nor is there anything in that fact to feel surprised at. English is the mother-tongue not only of the British, but of practically the whole of the United States, and also of large sections of people in Canada, South Africa, Australia ; and a number of talented Americans, Canadians, South Africans, 'Anstralians,' and others, had written poems in English during the last hundred and fifty years. And yet which of them had created any wide appeal in Britain itself ? The reply is obvious. The literature produced in the home country is so much superior to that produced in the colonies (past and present) that there is no incentive, on the part of the average Briton, to peruse them. That is the explanation of Iran's indifference to Iqbal. One should leave it at that.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Literary Value of Iqbal's Urdu Poetry.

اُردو ہے جس کا نام ہم ہی جانتے ہیں داغ  
ہندوستان میں دھوم ہماری زباں کی ہے  
نہیں کھیل اے داغ یاروں سے کہ در  
کہ آتی ہے اُردو زباں آتے آتے

"O, Dagh, I alone know the niceties of Urdu, and India resounds with applause over my mastery of that language. O, Dagh, tell your friends that far from being as easy as play, the acquisition of Urdu is a long and slow process."

—(Dagh, the poet).

"The foundations of Urdu had been laid by the joint efforts, and assimilation of the two major communities in India. I hope that the Urdu Congress will be the means of the further progress and enrichment of this common language, and will draw the two major communities closer together, so that they might really be of one heart, and speak with one mind".

—His Exalted Highness the Nizam's message to the All-India Urdu Congress, held at Hyderabad (Deccan) in July, 1914.

"Urdu was evolved by both Hindus and Muslims. It was not the language of any particular community. There might be local differences in the proportion of Hindi and Persian words, but on an average they were on a par. Those who wished to popularize Urdu, and remove hostility towards it, that might exist in some quarters, must bear in mind that Urdu should be easily understandable and simple".

—The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapro, in the course of his presidential address at the All-India Urdu Congress, held at Hyderabad (Deccan) in July, 1914.

"I would like to emphasise the need of simplifying Urdu which would not only popularize the language, but would bridge the gulf between Hindus and Muslims".

--The Nawab Sahab of Chhatari, President, H. E. H. the Nizam's Executive Council, at the Hyderabad session of the All-India Urdu Congress, held in July, 1941.

"Circumstanced as we are in this country, that language alone can truly claim to be our national language which is acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims".

--From the presidential address of Mr. S. Abdullah Brelvi, delivered at the All-India Urdu Journalists' Conference, held at Hyderabad (Deccan) in July, 1944.

"Purists at Delhi complain of his (Iqbal's) provincialisms".

--Mr. E. M. Forster (in an article on Iqbal, in the *Athenæum* of 10th December, 1920).

## II

I shall now deal with Iqbal's poetical works in Urdu, in which readers in India should be naturally more keenly interested than in those written in Persian, and in discussing which I do not labour under any such disadvantage, as I do in the case of the poet's Persian poems Iqbal is regarded (by the Punjabees in particular) as a great master of the Urdu language, and as one who made valuable contributions to its development as a vehicle for expressing subtle shades of thought. Thus a well-known Punjabi writer (Dr. Mulk Raj Anand) had recorded his view, that "Iqbal's early success depended on his attempting to perform a remarkable feat—his trying to enrich the poor vocabulary of Urdu (Hindustani) by introducing into it the touching metaphors and the tender images of Persian, as well as of Punjabi, and other Indian dialects, so as to mould Urdu into shape, and to modernize it". How far Iqbal deliberately made any such effort, and, if so, whether he succeeded in it to the extent alleged by Dr. Anand, is not known to me, since no independent and reliable authority, whose mother-tongue is Urdu, is known to me to have clearly expressed his opinion on this subject. On the contrary, there are reasons to believe that even in the opinion of many competent critics Iqbal did not make his mark as a writer of good Urdu. "Being by birth a Punjabi", writes Professor Bokhari, "his critics,

especially from the United Provinces, always reminded him with some justice but much more unkindness, of the bar sinister in his literary escutcheon " This terse statement is highly significant. Yet another qualified critic has it: " If we take into account the modern tendency in Urdu literature which seeks simple and homely, rather than Persianized expression, Iqbal is probably the last of the poets who followed Ghalib in style". That is a poor compliment in all conscience ; for whatever one's view of the style and the vocabulary of Ghalib, who died in 1869, one cannot be expected to condone the shortcomings in vocabulary and style of a poet who died about seventy years later.

One of Iqbal's greatest admirers—Mr. Akbar Ali (in his book called *Iqbal : His Poetry and Message*)—writes on this topic as follows :—" In his earlier poetic attempts in Urdu his language was simple, but with the advancement in thought Persian idioms and expressions crept in. But later, when the poet adopted Persian as his medium, Iqbal's Urdu has undergone a complete change"—a complete change for what, for the better or for the worse ? That the change was for the worse received confirmation and support at the Iqbal Day celebration held at Bombay, in 1942, at which one of the speakers, Dr. Nazir Ahmed, in dealing with the question of Iqbal's Urdu style spoke as follows :—" The poet had developed at an early age two distinct styles. One was a simple and flowing style—whereas the other was a complex and Persianized one. For long he was struggling between these two, because his emotional genius could not find its proper goal. In course of time patriotism afforded him the right anchor for his genius, and he selected the complex style to suit his purpose". If that be correct, then " the complex style " was the result of " patriotism "—an explanation, I confess, it is rather difficult for me to follow, for from the literary standpoint, I see no connection between patriotism and style. Be that as

it may, there can be no two opinions that the style adopted by Iqbal in by far the greater part of his poetical works in Urdu—whether it is the result of patriotism, or of any thing else—is highly artificial, in the sense that his vocabulary is borrowed, to an extent not approved by good sense or good usage, from the resources of the languages of Iran and Arabia, to the almost complete exclusion of words of Indian origin. This fact is undeniable, and is testified to by Mr. Akbar Ali and Dr. Nazir Ahmad; in fact, it is one which cannot be doubted or disputed by any unprejudiced or impartial student of Iqbal's Urdu poems.

### III

This literary phenomenon is, however, not confined to Iqbal alone, but is witnessed, on a large scale, in many other writers of Urdu during the current century. It also obtains, on an equally extensive scale, amongst modern writers of Hindi—with this difference that while the Urdu writer goes to Arabia and Persia for his vocabulary, the Hindi writer goes back to ancient India for borrowing mostly obsolete words from Sanskrit. Both classes of writers thus habitually ignore the natural strength and vast resources of pure and simple Hindi or Hindustani 'call it what you will', and thereby render their style markedly artificial by interlarding it with words absolutely unfamiliar to the vast bulk of the people, including even many who are fairly well-educated. A similar literary phenomenon, which manifested itself in England in the sixteenth century—on the publication of Lily's two prose romances, *Euphues : the Anatomy of Wit*, and its sequel, *Euphues and his England*—spread to such an extent that we still use the word "euphuism" to name the style of which the characteristics were excessive use of recondite and unfamiliar words, jejune epithets, uncalled-for alliterations, inapt antitheses, superfluous historical or mythological allusions, bombastic phrasco-

logies, and other peculiarities, which are now regarded as literary monstrosities. Euphuism disappeared after persisting, for a sufficiently long time, in English literature. Its influence can be traced in the highly Latinised style of Dr. Samuel Johnson, and some other eighteenth century writers. Sir Walter Scott caricatured and satirised euphuism in the person of one of his well-known characters—Sir Piercie Shafton—in his famous novel, The Monastery; and thanks to the good sense of writers in English, who succeeded Scott, all traces of euphuism had disappeared in English literature in the nineteenth century.

In India, however, euphuism is still rampant not only in borrowing vocabulary but also imagery, allusions and epithets, in the case of Urdu from Persian and Arabic, and in that of Hindi from Sanskrit—and scarcely any author has proved courageous enough to break through the literary convention, so established, alike in Hindi and Urdu literatures. It were much to be wished that Iqbal, with his great literary gifts, had tried to do so, but he did not; and as a result of it his style in the bulk of his Urdu poetical works remained turgid and inflated, instead of being simple and chaste and intelligible to the majority of his readers. Not only was thus a great opportunity missed by Iqbal of making Urdu an ever so much more popular form of language, but his compositions have had the undesirable effect of introducing into the language a rigidity and a turgidity, which are likely to retard its progress as the *lingua franca* of India. I have often been told by the defenders of the present pedantic and stilted style of writing in Hindi and Urdu that without such large importations—either from the ancient speech of India, or from the languages of Persia and Arabia—it would not be possible to convey either emotional ideas, or higher conceptions of religion and philosophy, in verse or prose.

But I am not prepared to accept the soundness of this view after having admired and enjoyed the splendid poems of Nazeer (Akharabadi), and also of a contemporary Lucknow poet, Syed Anwar Hussain "Arzoo"—called "Surili Bansuri"—written in what this great poet calls "Khalis Urdu", or pure Urdu. On the subject of Nazeer's position in Urdu poetry I cannot do better than quote a few sentences from the long and glowing tribute paid to him by a distinguished European scholar and lexicographer (Dr. Fallon), in the preface to his standard work, the *Hindustani English Dictionary*:—"Nazeer is the only poet whose verses have made their way to the people, and are recited and sung. He possessed all the qualities of mind and feeling which distinguish genius, and laid under contribution the treasures of the mother-tongue as only Chaucer and Shakespeare succeeded in doing. He has presented Hindi words in all the felicitous combinations of which they were capable; and, with the bold self-confidence of genius, he has dared to use words in new combinations and senses, which are always happy. There is scarcely an indifferent line in all that Nazeer has written. The depth of his thought, and the force of his combinations, in which each word brings out the meaning of the other, come out the more they are dwelt upon." This is a very just estimate.

In contrast with his enthusiastic appreciation of Nazeer, Dr. Fallon expressed his frank disapproval of the style of the poet Nasikh, who is "the idol of the literary class, who are incompetent to appreciate Nazeer, whose similes are most ingeniously unlike and wide of the truth, and whose language is only a string of Arabic and Persian words, and Persian constructions, in which company a vulgar Hindi auxiliary, or particle, is admitted only when it cannot possibly be kept out". This criticism of Nasikh's style may equally be applied to much of what

Iqbal wrote in Urdu particularly in his later years, which is to be found in his second collection of poems called *Bal-e-Jibrael*. As in the case of Nazeer, a perusal of Arzoo's poems also should satisfy every reasonable critic that pure Urdu (as used by the Lucknow poet) is not only snappy, sweet and intelligible, but is quite capable of expressing the highest human emotions; and there is no reason to apprehend that it would prove unequal to expressing higher ideals of life in the domain of theology or philosophy. Put shortly, it is not the fault of the language, but of the writers who habitually misuse it by overloading their writings in Urdu, with pompous, pedantic and outlandish Persian words and phrases, and those in Hindi with obsolete and stilted Sanskrit terms,—which (in the words of Milton) "would have made Quintilian stare and gasp"—and which had better be left alone with great advantage. It is, therefore, much to be regretted that Iqbal, instead of casting his influence on the side of the simplification of the Urdu language, threw it on the opposite side by his own writings and example and by not only imitating Ghalib's style, but overdoing it at times.

#### IV

As compared with the bulk of his poems in Persian, Iqbal's output in Urdu is slender; nor is it of the same philosophic importance as his Persian poems. Sir Abdur Qadir (in a foreword which he wrote to a volume of Iqbal's poems) earnestly expressed the hope that, after trying his hand at Persian, the poet might return to Urdu as his medium of expression, and give to his countrymen some more poems in that one of the two principal literary languages of Upper India. This desire was shared by many an admirer of Iqbal. Their wish was complied with, but *Bal-e-Jibrael*, the second of the two volumes of his Urdu poems (issued in 1935) disappointed several of



Iqbal's discerning admirers. For one thing, its language was so highly over-Persianised, and interlarded with grandiloquent and sesquipedalian phraseology, that its prototype in English would be rightly designated *Bombastes Furioso*. Take the very first lines of that volume :—

میرے نوائے شوق سے شورِ حریمِ حرات میں  
غلغلہ ہائے الامان بتکدہٴ صفات میں

حرور و فرشتہ ہیں اسیر میرے تجلیات میں  
میری نگاہ سے خلل میری تجلیات میں

or another verse on page 128 :—

عشقِ فقیہِ حرمِ عشقِ امیرِ جنوں  
عشق ہے ابنِ السبیل اُس کے ہزاروں مقام

or still another on page 21 :—

حجابِ اکسیر ہے آوارہٴ کوٹھےِ محبت کو  
میری آتش کو بھڑکاتی ہے تیری دیرِ پیوندی

or one more from page 95

خرابِ کوشکِ سلطان و خانقاہِ فقیر

نغاں کہ تخت و مصلے کمالِ زراتی

Such stanzas or complets from Iqbal's Urdu poems—especially, *Bal-e-Jibrael*—could easily be multiplied. Now, we know that Milton wrote poems in very good Latin, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had written them exceedingly well in English ; similarly, it was open to Iqbal to write in Persian, if he so chose. But when an Indian poet, though of Punjabi birth, chooses to write poems in Hindustani (or in Urdu, if you will), one naturally expects him to write in that language, and not in a pale imitation of a foreign idiom interspersed with only such Indian words without which he cannot at all express himself—viz., Indian verbs, particles, pronouns, and prepositions. It is neither the language of Persia, nor that

of Hindustan, but can only be regarded as a hybrid unworthy of vogue. If it be urged that similar sesquipedalianism is to be found equally in Iqbal's earlier collection of Urdu poems, called *Bange-i-Dara*, it must be said in favour of the latter that it was not unoften redeemed by flashes and outbursts of genuine poetry. It is not so, however, in *Bal-e-Jibraiel*, in which the deterioration of the language and style seems to be almost complete : and its verses—with rare exceptions—are limp and insipid ; nor do they ring true. To take but a few examples :—

خر دہندوں سے کیا پوچھوں کہ میری ابتدا کیا ہے  
 کہ میں اس فکر میں رہتا ہوں میری انتہا کیا ہے  
 مقام گفتگو کیا ہے اگر میں کیمیا گر ہوں  
 یہی سوز نفس ہے اور میری کیمیا کیا ہے  
 مکتبوں میں کہیں رعنائی اژکار بھی ہے  
 خانقاہوں میں کہیں لذت اسرار بھی ہے  
 منزل راہ رواں دور بھی ہے دشوار بھی ہے  
 کوتی اس قافلہ میں قافلہ سالار بھی ہے  
 تیرا اندیشہ اغلا کی نہیں ہے  
 تیری پرواز لولا کی نہیں ہے  
 یہ ماما اصل شاعری ہے تیری  
 تیری آنکھوں میں بیباکی نہیں ہے

Or take again the following verse from *Zarb-e-Kaleem*, which Iqbal addresses to his readers :—

جب تک نہ زندگی کے حقائق پہ ہو نظر  
 تیرا زجاج ہو نہ سکے گا حریف سنگ

An attempt to discuss a larger number of the lapses from good usage in the language used by Iqbal in his Urdu poems, would require much longer space than I can spare. But I shall give a few more examples. Of the

five verses quoted below the first is from *Bange-i-Dara*, and the rest from *Bal-e-Jibraiel* : —

مذہب ہے حس کا ذمہ رہے ابکِ حنون خام  
 ہے حس سے آدمی کے تخیل کو ارتعاش  
 ساقی ارناب ذوقِ فارس میدانِ شوق  
 دادہ ہے اس کا رحمق قلع ہے اس کی اسیل  
 ہم بندش و روز میں جکڑے ہوئے بندے  
 تو خالقِ اعصار و نگارندۂ انات  
 لہجہ بھی تو قلم بھی تو قدرِ وجودِ الکتاب  
 گنبدِ آبگینہ رنگِ قبرے مکھیط میں حباب  
 جو ذوقِ فطرت سے نہیں لائقِ ہرراز  
 اس سرخکِ بیچارہ کا انجام ہے انتاد

Now those who see nothing exceptionable in the language of such verses cannot be credited with possessing a true conception of the beauty of Urdu, as used by some of its great masters. To notice the first of the five verses, the introduction of the Persian word *intiash* (the last word in the second line), as also of the wholly foreign phraseology — *takhaiul ko intiash* will jar on any one conversant with good Urdu, quite apart from the sentiment sought to be expressed by the poet. Though I am not concerned with the sentiment conveyed in the verse in question but with the language in which it is couched, it is noticeable that in neither the sentiment nor the language can it be said to be an achievement for a great Urdu poet. In the other verses — to take them in the order in which they are printed above — one finds, in the second one, the poet using such words as *faris*, *rahceq*, and *aseel*, which are wholly foreign to good usage in Urdu, and cannot be acclaimed for felicitousness. In the third verse, the expressions *thaliq-e-ataar* and *nigarinda-e-anaat* are not only Persian phraseologies not naturalised in Urdu, but are wholly non-Indian in construction, and infelicitous to a degree, which

cannot be approved of by any discriminating admirer of the niceties of the Urdu language. Surely, Urdu is not so grossly destitute of words and expressions as not to convey high philosophic sentiments, without resort to unfamiliar Persian vocabulary, or phraseology. These very defects appear markedly in the fourth and fifth verses. In them, as in the others quoted above, the forced introduction of unfamiliar, foreign, and non-naturalised words and phrases seriously affects the beauty of style, and the rhythm and flow of the language, and makes it halting and jerky. Enough has been said to indicate the objections that may reasonably be urged against the language not unoften employed by Iqbal, in his Urdu poems. To sum up the contentions : it is urged (on the basis of the materials brought together in this chapter) that the poet had frequently used, in his Urdu poems, unfamiliar, unconst and unnaturalised Persian words and expressions, not warranted by good usage, judged by the example and standard of the masters of Urdu language, with the inevitable result that the style of Iqbal's Urdu poems is generally turgid and bombastic. But if the indiscriminating admirers of the poet choose to believe that he was a great master of Urdu, they are quite welcome to do so, as this thesis has been written for those who are open to conviction, and are seekers after Truth, and not for those who would prefer to live under the influence of their preconceived notions.

## V

Thus Iqbal's Urdu poems (in his last volume, in particular) are not only a feeble echo of his earlier poetry in the same language ; but they are also, very unfortunately, full of sermons, preachings and propaganda. There have been, no doubt, a small number of poets who possessed and displayed power and potency to transmute religion, philosophy, and even science, into poetry, by the alchemy of their genius, and who have embodied

their ideals in didactic poems, without disturbing their beauty, harmony and symmetry. It must not be forgotten, however, that even in the case of these great masters—as, for instance, one of the greatest Latin poets Lucretius, in his *De Natura Rerum* ("On the Nature of Things"), which is an exposition of the atomic theory—the primary interest of the reader is with their poetry, and not with their religion, or philosophy, or science. But it is not every one, who (to use a Hindu mythological metaphor) can bend the bow of the great God, Shiva, and when a poet goes beyond his depth and attempts what is beyond his power, his Muse becomes—as she is bound to become—prosaic and pedestrian. Even in the case of so great a genius as Lucretius, a scholarly critic remarks that "the poem is a piece of earnest controversial writing designed to instruct rather than please, and much of the matter does not lend itself easily to poetical treatment". In other words, there is much in the poem of Lucretius which comes under the category of "literature of information", but not under that of "literature of inspiration", that is, "creative", or "imaginative" literature. It is surely no disrespect to Iqbal to say that he did not succeed where Lucretius failed—that is, in making purely didactic themes fit subjects for inspiring poetry. Forgetting Herbert Spencer's great but wholesome dictum that no one should write poetry, if one can help it, Iqbal in the last of the two of his volumes of Urdu poems—just as in his Persian poems—set out deliberately and with a stern determination, to propound and propagate, in a didactic form, his religious ideas and philosophic conceptions. And the pity of it is that his sermons are not sermons in stones, or books in running brooks; they are like the set, solid, sermons of a stolid and dogmatic bishop, delivered from the pulpit of a cathedral. As justly emphasised by Macaulay 'in the course of his famous essay on Milton':

"The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit

is that of attempting to philosophise too much", and this is just what Iqbal did. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the reputation of Iqbal as an Urdu poet, will not rest on his later collection of poems—called *Bal-e-Jibrael*—if it will not on his earlier collection, *Bang-e-Dara*. This seems to me the only verdict on Iqbal as an Urdu poet, in the interest of the maintenance of sound criticism, and correct literary standard.

## VI

The author of *Iqbal : His Art and Thought* is undoubtedly one of the greatest votaries of the poet. Yet even he writes :—"In some of the poems, specially in *Bal-i-Jabrail*, there is undoubtedly an oddity of expression which, on first reading, often strikes one as lack of spontaneity. The reason is not far to seek. As Iqbal's outlook developed, he had new mystic experiences, and old words and expressions were inadequate to describe them, and so he had to coin new terms and expressions. From the very beginning, Iqbal started coining new expressions and phrases, but in the beginning the need for these was not so great ; and perhaps Iqbal did not dare defy conventions so brazenly, although he always maintained that it was necessary to do so in a language like Urdu. Towards the end, the need for these new expressions became irresistible, and Iqbal threw overboard all respect for literary usage." These observations are highly significant. The defence set up by the writer is that Iqbal's bombasticism and sesquipedalianism are to be justified on the ground that he found the Urdu language—as it had been used till his time by its greatest masters, from Meer and Dard to Ghalib and Dagh—almost wholly inadequate to convey his highest metaphysical flights, and was thus forced to coin words, terms and expressions, based on or derived from the languages of Arabia and Persia, rather than utilise, by moulding to

his purpose, the language as it had grown on the soil of India, as the result of mutual contact between Hindus and Muslims, which, as such is known throughout the world as "Hindustani"—though its popular name in India is at present "Urdu".

No such untenable defence had ever been set up, to my knowledge, in the case of any other poet in the literary history of the world, for defiance of literary conventions and standard ; and the burden of justifying the very serious transgressions of Iqbal, in this respect, thus lies on those who assert that his attempt and attitude were correct. My contention is that there was no justification for such a serious and indefensible departure on the part of Iqbal, from the literary standard of Urdu as fixed by its greatest masters from the time of Meer and Dard. I shall accordingly examine this question at some length, in the light of the latest declarations on the subject of highly competent authorities, whose opinions are justly entitled to great weight. The first session was held at Hyderabad (Deccan), in 1944, of an All India Urdu Congress, at which the Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, in the course of his inaugural address, emphatically declared : —" Urdu was evolved by both Hindus and Muslims. It was not the language of any particular community. The differences existing on the language problem in India are due to mutual misunderstandings. I do not admit that Urdu is the exclusive language of any one community. If Mussalmans claim that Urdu is their own language, I strongly differ from them". Sir Tej Bahadur then proceeded to affirm : —" There might be local differences in the proportion of Hindi and Persian words, but, on an average, they were on a par. Those who wish to popularise Urdu must bear in mind that Urdu should be easily understandable and simple. These are the views of one who cannot possibly be accused of holding any partisan views,

on this subject, and as such deserve the most serious consideration at the hands of all those working for a solution of the language problem in the country.

The views expressed by Sir Tej Bahadur had received confirmation and support from authoritative quarters. In the course of his message to the Conference, His Exalted Highness the Nizam declared : — “ The foundations of Urdu had been laid by the joint efforts and assimilation of the two major communities in India. I earnestly hope that the All-India Urdu Congress will be the means of the future progress and enrichment of this common language of the two major communities of India, and will draw them closer together so that they will really be of one heart, and speak one mind”. Nor was the President of the Executive Council of His Exalted Highness's Government, the Nawab Saheb of Chhatari, any the less insistent on this subject. He said, in the course of his presidential address : — “ In my opinion simple Urdu will not only become more popular, but will bridge the artificial gulf which is growing between the Muslims and Hindus on account of their differences in regard to Hindi and Urdu. Urdu, or Hindustani, is the common heritage of both communities, and its basis is the historical fact that through its medium alone the two races first tried to understand each other, and to create mutual contacts— that is the reason why it derives its origin, on the one hand, from Arabic and Persian, and, on the other, from Sanskrit and Bhasha ” — which latter term is another name for “ Hindi ”.

Sometime later, the Nawab Saheb of Chhatari — presiding at a session of the Bombay Presidency Muslim Educational Conference, held at Poona — adverted, in the course of his presidential address, to the same subject, and expressed himself as follows : — “ I caution Muslims against the stress usually laid on Urdu as if it was the language of



any one community. Whether you call it Urdu, or Hindustani, its very origin is based on the will of the two communities to understand each other ; and even to-day, despite communal atmosphere, it is an all-India language spoken or understood by men of different communities". Now the passages quoted above from the speeches of three of the most qualified authorities on the language (called Urdu, in common parlance, and Hindustani by foreigners and scholars), fully support the contentions raised by me in this chapter. If their views and observations, as set forth above, are correct and well-founded—as is certainly the case—who that knows the Urdu poems of Iqbal (especially in his later collections) can bring himself to approve of his style and diction, interlarded as they are with eighty to ninety per cent. of almost unfamiliar words of non-Indian origin, which are bound to be unintelligible to the vast majority of his Indian readers—apart from the language being highly artificial, inflated, and stilted. It is a great mistake to believe that an Indian Muslim—even in those parts of the country where Urdu (or Hindustani) is either indigenous, or is spoken and understood by the school-and-college educated classes, as the result of compulsory education in the subject (as in the Punjab)—can appreciate the full import and true significance of such bombastic language as is generally affected by Iqbal, and others of his school of writing. If, in the words of Sir Tej Bahadur, Urdu should be "easily understandable", to enable both Hindus and Muslims to be "of one heart and one mind" (to quote the language of His Exalted Highness the Nizam) since it is—as put by the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari—"the common heritage of both communities, then it can be unhesitatingly asserted that the poet failed in attaining the standard laid down by the eminent authorities, quoted by me as the criteria for a successful writer in Urdu

## VII

Hindustani (whether in its Persianised form called Urdu or its Sanskritised form called Hindi) is a very difficult language to master thoroughly, for those who cannot claim it as their mother tongue. "I have only one complaint against Urdu—its absurd rules regarding *tazkir* and *taanis*, that is, its rules regarding gender"—said the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, Education Minister of Bengal, in the course of an address delivered in Calcutta, on the Iqbal Day Celebration, in 1944. The Education Minister's mother-tongue being Bengalee—which has evidently no "absurd rules" regarding distinctions in gender—he must have naturally felt great difficulty in mastering the intricacies of Hindustani grammar. It is very probably to this stumbling block of distinctions in gender, among others, that the famous Urdu poet, Dagh, referred (in some of his verses, taken as motto to this chapter), when he said that acquiring mastery over Urdu was no play, but the result of a long and slow process. It is not surprising that in view of Iqbal's mother-tongue being Panjabi, the language of his Urdu poems, had formed a favourite target of criticisms—particularly on the score of his wrong usage in gender. But I have refrained from referring to it, and to such other matters, confining myself to what I regard as the more serious defect—namely, the over-Persianisation of the poet's style, resulting in bombasticism and sesquipedalianism, and thus marring the prospects of the more extensive use of the Urdu language, apart from his poems being unintelligible to readers not well versed in Persian.

Quite apart from the special difficulties involved in the mastery of Urdu, it may be accepted as an unimpeachable literary axiom, that no one had hitherto succeeded in so effectively mastering a language not his own mother-tongue, as to be able to produce in it a great work of imagination. Macaulay expressed that view more than a century back in

his essay on Frederick the Great, (in the *Edinburgh Review*) when he wrote as follows:—"No noble work of imagination was ever composed by any man except in the dialect which he had learnt without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had analysed its structure. Romans of great abilities wrote Greek verses, but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems, but none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second". The view so emphatically stated by Macaulay is incontestable; and no one conversant with the history of Literature will attempt to refute it. A work in prose may possibly attain a position, in the "first class of art", if written by a man of genius, even in a foreign idiom—though that also is very rare—about the only instance being that of Joseph Conrad, the Pole, who is the author of some excellent novels in English. But Conrad was wise enough never to venture on composing poems in English. These unimpeachable facts point a moral which is obvious, and which cannot be overlooked or ignored in a discussion of Iqbal's position in the ranks of great Urdu poets, or masters of the Urdu language. The modern tendency in Urdu is well emphasised in the extracts from the speeches and writings of eminent authorities, printed as mottoes to this chapter.

---

first appearance. It is now not twenty but about forty years behind the times.

Iqbal was right in his estimate of the value of his book, in 1928. As such its utility to the student had long been personal—as attesting the great interest Iqbal took as a student at the University in studying Persian Metaphysics—but it no longer reflected modern research and scholarship in the subject it dealt with. Nor was Iqbal an admirer of the genius of Persia in the domain of metaphysical thought, as evinced by what he wrote in the book, in question, on the subject of the profundity of Persian philosophy as compared with that of India :—“ The Hindu, while admitting, like the Persian, the necessity of a higher source of knowledge, yet calmly moves from experience to experience, mercilessly dissecting them, and forcing them to yield their underlying universality. In fact, the Persian is only half-conscious of Metaphysics as a system of thought ; his Brahmin brother, on the other hand, is fully alive to the need of presenting his theory in the form of a thoroughly reasoned-out system. And the result of this mental difference between the two nations is clear. In the one case we have only partially worked-out systems of thought ; in the other case, the awful sublimity of the searching Vedanta ”. For these reasons, Iqbal's book will not keep his name alive as an expounder of Persian Philosophy.

### III

The other work of Iqbal, in English, was issued in 1930, under the cumbrous title of *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. A second edition of it appeared in 1934, with an additional chapter, but apparently without any changes in the old text—though in the title the words “ Six Lectures on ” were dropped. Sir Denison Ross had remarked about it :—“ In 1934, he (Iqbal) published a series of six lectures, in which he set forth more plainly his philosophy and his ideals, for a better world

centred in Islam, entitled *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, by which he will probably be best remembered". This estimate of Iqbal's book by a distinguished European scholar of Islamic literature—that it will be remembered by posterity more than any of Iqbal's other works in prose or verse—will no doubt be highly shocking to the uncritical admirers of the poet, but it is nonetheless a sound critical dictum as this prose-work, in English, is undoubtedly by far and away Iqbal's most notable literary achievement. It is certainly the most important work of Iqbal as an Islamic thinker and expositor. The poet expounds in it his theory by which he seeks to reconcile Muslims to the introduction of reforms (as, for instance, in modern Turkey) with the rigid dogmas of Islamic *shariat*. It is a well-written work, and the exposition is lucid and interesting, though not always convincing; for, as the *Times* put it, in its obituary notice of Iqbal: "soundness and exactitude of historical judgment were not his special endowment". "The fact was", it continued, "that in maturity, as in youth, he sought to reconcile the most recent philosophical systems, into which he gathered up the latest scientific conclusions, with the teaching of the Koran"—or, to put it correctly, with his interpretation of what is recorded in the Quran. It is not surprising, therefore, that Iqbal failed to carry conviction to thoughtful and impartial readers by reason of the unscientific method he adopted for reconciling the two irreconcilables, namely, dogmatic theology and the conclusions of the latest science. And so his last English work also is not likely to add to his reputation as a writer possessed of philosophical acumen and critical insight. Even if religion be held, in the case of Iqbal, to be synonymous with Islam—as Christianity is with many western writers on philosophy—nevertheless the fact remains that Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is far removed from a work like Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, a study of which

is a liberal education for any unbiased student, wholly irrespective of the particular religion he may profess. Iqbal's book is of interest not so much for what it says, as for who it is that says it. It is of value not so much for knowing what Islam teaches, as for the interpretation given to it by the mind of Iqbal. It is a contribution not so much towards an appraisal of Islam, as an expression of Iqbal's mind itself. Its main interest is thus biographical rather than philosophical.

Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is—as stated above—not so much an exposition of historical Islam as of the mental evolution of Iqbal himself. In it he is, in fact, not expounding the Quran, but is reading into it as much of modern knowledge and philosophy as he himself had been able to assimilate. That he did so is beyond dispute, but he can be justly defended for so doing on the ground that this is what all religious reformers are not only constantly doing, but must do, if they are to achieve their object. In fact, the progress of the world's religions invariably takes this very form : that their advanced followers read into their scriptures their own higher conceptions and ideals. To practice moderns, even when apparently sincere followers of some religious tradition, are guided not wholly by that tradition alone, but by that tradition as interpreted by themselves, or by their contemporary expositors and leaders ; and such interpretations are thus necessarily coloured by modern insights. In fact, it is by means of such a process that newer conceptions of life are evolved out of old creeds. The discovery of the above basic principle makes it possible to understand much in the religions of to-day. Viewed in this light, all religion in the world to-day is thus technically a vast misinterpretation, which gives it, however, additional strength, and makes it live. Both Hinduism and Christianity are notable instances of such an interpretative process.

In any case, so long as a man remains a Hindn, a Muslim, a Christian, or the follower of any other historical and recognised religion, it is better (as well as inevitable) that he read into his religion modern conceptions and ideals, to make it suit his environments and requirements rather than founder with the old unsuitable ones. As what a man generally deems highest and most valuable is his religion, so he must put into it (if it is not there already) what he regards essential for himself, or for his contemporaries. This is exactly what Iqbal did in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, on the principle that he who comes upon what he regards as a new truth must either incorporate it in his old religion, or be felt compelled to abandon that religion. Most people naturally choose the former process, and no blame can, therefore, attach to Iqbal for having done the same. If any grievance can be made against him in this respect, it is that he did not go far enough, and did not interpret Islam as liberally, in consonance with modern requirements, as he might reasonably have been expected to do, considering his great intellectuality. This particular matter is also discussed in some other chapters of this book.

### III

Suffice it to say, that from a great intellectual personality like Iqbal one reasonably expected an interpretation of Islam which, by reason of its influence on the admirers of the poet, would have suited modern requirements, and been conducive to the cultural advancement and social progress of Indian Muslims—on some such line as, say, that adopted by a great Indo Muslim scholar (Mr. Salahuddin Khuda Bakhsh), from whose writings (mainly, *Essays : Indian and Islamic* and *Studies : Indian and Islamic*) I shall quote some passages to indicate his method of interpretation of Islam on progressive lines. Writes he :—“ It would be the merest affectation to

contend that religious and social systems, hequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration". I may quote a longer passage from the same writer in furtherance of the view expressed above:—"Is Islam hostile to progress? I will emphatically answer this question in the negative. Islam, stripped of its theology, is a perfectly simple religion. Its cardinal principle is belief in one God, and belief in Muhammad as his apostle. The rest is mere accretion, superfluity. The Quran rightly understood and interpreted, is a spiritual guide containing counsels, and putting forward ideals, to be followed by the faithful, rather than a *corpus juris civile* to be accepted for all time. It was never the intention of the Prophet—and no enlightened Muslim believes that it ever was—to lay down immutable rules, or to set up a system of law which was to be binding upon humanity, apart from consideration of time and place, and the growing necessities arising from changed conditions. True, for the purposes of order and security, and the preservation and maintenance of the new society created by Islam, he laid down rules regulating marriage, inheritance, and so forth; but these rules were mostly of a very elementary character, and were intended to meet the existing conditions of things. The position of Muhammad, indeed, was that of a spiritual teacher, a prophet, and not that of a legislator. In the infancy of human society there is but a faint line of demarcation between law and religion, the two being inseparably connected with each other. With advancing civilization, the line becomes clearer and sharper, and religion and law become separate and distinct. Such was the case at Rome, and such has been the case at Mekka."

To develop the point made above, Mr. Khuda Bakhsh argues as follows:—"All respect and honour is due to the



law laid down by Muhammad, but the very fact that Muslim jurisprudence grew into a stupendous fabric within an incredibly short time, partly by interpretation, and partly by adoption of foreign rules, unmistakably proves that the legislation of the Prophet of Arabia made no claim to finality. It shows beyond doubt or cavil, that the law of the Prophet was neither wide, nor comprehensive enough to cover the newly-arisen conditions of life in which Muslims (Arabs) found themselves after their brilliant and extensive conquests" Again : " The requirements of Islam are at once easy and simple, and leave scope to Muslims to take part in their duties as subjects or citizens, to attend to their religious obligation without sacrificing their worldly prosperity, and to adopt whatever is good in any community or civilization without any interference on the part of their religion". As regards the method and process of change, he writes :—" We believe that opinion, and nothing but opinion, can effect great permanent changes"—that is, evidently by means of education, and freedom of thought, since he declares that " there is nothing in its (Islam's) teachings which conflicts with, or militates against, modern civilization". These few extracts, and other passages declaring similar sentiments which could easily be quoted from his writings, clearly establish that Mr Khuda Bakhsh was a liberal interpreter of Islam, and a rationalistic (as opposed to a dogmatic expositor of his religion, and that he shared the views on the interpretation of Islam as expressed by the Right Hon'ble Dr Syed Ameer Ali, and other eminent Indo Muslim scholars

It is in this particular respect that there is a marked contrast between Iqbal, on the one hand, and the liberal and progressive interpreters of Islam—like the Right Hon'ble Dr Syed Ameer Ali, Sir Ahmad Hussain (Nawab Amin Jang Bahadur) Mr. Khuda Bakhsh, and several others, on the other, from whose writings I have quoted in this book. Iqbal

is obsessed throughout with theological dogmatism, and cannot get away from it sufficiently far, in spite of a half-hearted effort to do so, as, for instance, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*), because he is too much wedded to the letter rather than to an appreciation of the spirit of the teachings of Islam, as enjoined in the Qoran. The liberal and progressive interpreters, on the other hand, seek to find in the spirit of Islamic teachings, as embodied in the Qoran, rather than in the letter of the text, the necessary impetus and sanction conducive to their conceptions of the modern requirements of Indo-Islamic society. It is all due to a difference in the temperament and mentality in the approach made to religion, either through the medium of dogmatism or rationalism. Iqbal was devoted to the former process, while the liberals and progressives are attached to the latter method. This difference in the process and method of approach, in the interpretation of a religion, naturally leads to different results—desirable or undesirable, as the case may be—and it affects for better or for worse the fortunes of the followers of that religion.

All the great religions have passed through these processes, and the well-being of their votaries had been affected thereby according to the interpretation placed upon the texts of their scriptures by their expounders. Viewed from the liberal and progressive standpoint the interpretation had resulted in the happiness and prosperity of their followers; but interpreted in the spirit of dogmatism, that is with regard to the letter of the text detached from its spirit, the same religion had led to the stagnation, and the ultimate decadence of the people professing that creed. Christendom, after suffering for centuries from the evil effects of dogmatism, had at last passed under the benign influence of liberalism and rationalism in matters religious. And so had lately Hinduism—though not yet to the same extent as Christianity. Islam also had

for its inhibitive effect on the growth of Islamic thought". Another highly qualified interpreter of Iqbal, Mr. G. Sarwar, also, deals with this very subject in his essay on "Some Aspects of Iqbal's Poetry"—contributed to the *S. P. Shah In Memoriam Volume* (1941) — in the course of which he writes:—" Iqbal is the deadly foe of Platonism, from which mysticism is derived. Plato's teachings, according to Iqbal, encouraged a static state of life, a state which is worse than death". Still Mr. Sarwar adds in defence of the poet : " Iqbal's denunciation of Plato does not proceed from any bellicose spirit, but is due to the disastrous effect of his teaching on the Islamic world. No nation anxious for its progress will have anything to do with it ".

Now the view of Plato's philosophy, held by Iqbal, and the contentions of his defenders in support of it, are not likely to be accepted as sound and well-founded, by any impartial student of the history of philosophy. The main assumptions underlying them—that the decline and fall of several Islamic peoples was due to their having been greatly influenced by a spirit of mysticism (or sufism), which in itself was the product of Plato's teachings—are by no means warranted in the light of the authentic records of Islamic history, or history of philosophy. To take but one instance, the history of India for the period, which may be called "Islamic" *par excellence*, the fairly long period of nearly fifty years covered by the reign of Aurangzeb. That that Emperor was not a sufi (or mystic, or Platonist), but rather a true follower of Islamic dogmas, according to his lights, and the embodiment of Islamic influence, spirit, teaching and traditions, is acknowledged by all historians. The latest writer on Indo-Muslim history—Mr. S. M. Jaffar—writes about Aurangzeb, as follows, in his book called *The Moghal Empire From Babar to Aurangzeb*: "The background in the case of Mughal Emperors was Islam on the one hand, and x..

It is a strange and an unfounded theory of Iqbal's that the Muslim rulers lost their kingdoms or empires because their peoples came under the influence of mysticism, derived from the teachings of Plato. Had he but reflected with a correct historical perspective, and tried to appreciate the causes of the decline and fall of States, the poet would have learnt that such historic phenomena occurred, occur, and will continue to occur, not as the result of the influence of mysticism, but of moving forces which were and are purely physical and terrestrial, and not mystic or supersensual. To this general law—the law of the ultimate destruction of every thing—the history of Islamic peoples forms no exception whatsoever. Have not large sections in almost all western countries in Europe, and also in America, been permeated through and through for centuries by the teachings of Plato—that also to a much larger extent than any Muslim people can be said to have been, at any time? And have not several western peoples also lost their political and intellectual ascendancy? But has any historian or poet of either the East or the West attributed such historic phenomena to the growth and expansion amongst them of Platonism? The proposition has thus only to be stated to be rejected. And yet Iqbal, on the basis of a wholly unwarranted assumption, denounced in one breath, two such world figures as Plato, the greatest exponent of practical idealism, in the West, and Hafiz one of the greatest philosophic lyrists of the world.

### V

Iqbal called Plato the "leader of the old herd of sheep". This obviously betrays such a lack of a sense of proportion that one may reasonably doubt if Iqbal at all correctly interpreted, and truly appreciated, the teachings of Plato, whom so great an authority as Professor A. N. Whitehead had declared as "the Greek philosopher who laid the foundation of all our finer thoughts". What did Plato

teach? What influences had he wielded over the world of thought and culture these many centuries, since he wrote his world-famous *Dialogues*? To what extent had he exercised those influences on the life, thought, and cultural destinies of humanity, in the course of the ages that had followed since his death, in 347 B. C.? What moral power had he exerted, and intellectual ascendancy established, over the educational, political, moral and religious developments of mankind, by means of his teachings, and the resultant forces emanating therefrom? To answer these questions adequately would require rather a separate and bulky volume, and were I to adopt even the next best course, and make but the briefest extracts from the works of qualified writers, on the subject, of all ages and climes, they would swell this book beyond reasonable proportions.

I shall, therefore, limit myself to the comments of but one writer—the latest expositor of Plato, Sir Richard Livingstone, President of the Corpus Christi College, Oxford. In the course of an Introduction, and introductory notes, contributed by him (in 1940) to his *Selected Passages from Plato*, this is what Sir Richard writes:—"Plato is one of the greatest thinkers and writers of the world. Perhaps no thinker has had as deep and permanent an influence on European thought as Plato; his greatest writings are on religion, morals and politics". After these general observations, Sir Richard refers specifically to Plato's contributions to, and influence upon, the study and progress of the subjects he dealt with. Taking literature first, Sir Richard reminds us that Plato "is present in some of the greatest English poets; if he had never lived, Spencer, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Bridges, would not have written some of their most characteristic poetry". Sir Richard next refers to Plato's work and influence in the domain of religion and philosophy:—"Plato is as important in the history of religion as in the history of political

thought. He created the philosophy of natural religion", and "is present in religion; the opening sentences in St. John's Gospel reflect his thought, and he was the first to argue that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." As regards his contributions to the Science of Education, Plato—we are told by Sir Richard—"is the first man to have seen the importance of education, and to make it central in his political philosophy; much of modern educational theory he anticipated". Further, education meant to Plato "the conversion of the whole mind from the shows and shadows of the changing world to the eternal realities." Lastly, coming to politics and philosophy, Sir Richard tells us that Plato "is present in politics", and he quotes in support of his view the declaration of Mr. H. G. Wells (in his *The Shape of Things to Come*) that "if any one is to be called the father of Modern State, it is Plato". It was, therefore, that Tennyson (in his *Lucretius*) had urged on his readers to "lend an ear to Plato", and (in his *Palace of Art*) called him "the first of those who know".

But that is not all; as Sir Richard holds that Plato was not only a philosopher, "but an essentially practical philosopher." He continues: "To think of Plato as a theorist is wholly to misconceive him", as "it is this practical interest which makes Plato so stimulating as a political thinker". Sir Richard then sums up his conclusions as follows:—"His views have never died. He brought into the world one of the great schools of political thought". "The variety of his interests, the stimulus of his outlook, the human interest illuminating his abstract thought, his imaginative power, the brilliance of his writing"—all these are, in the opinion of Sir Richard Livingstone, the striking characteristics of the works and teachings of Plato, which were evidently lost on Iqbal, as evidenced by his observation that he (Plato) was a "leader

of the old herd of sheep " 1 Who are the people who are stigmatised by Iqbal as of the same species with sheep? Are they the Europeans, and their descendants in their colonies, and in America, whose only fault has been that though they have built up many strong States, under the influence of the stimulus imparted by Plato's teachings and ideals, they have not allowed their States to perish, to enable Iqbal to support his unfounded contention that some Muslim States had passed away solely as the result of their having come under Plato's intellectual influence? As for Iqbal's unjustifiable strictures on Plato himself, one need not waste time in attempting to refute them. And this for the simple reason that it is clear as the noonday sun that long after the works of our modern philosophers would have ceased to exert influence on any one, and any where, those of Plato will continue (as they have done till now) to permeate the higher thought of humanity in various spheres of activities, and assist as a living force in the solution of our problems even to-day.

It may, however, be argued with some show of reason that what Iqbal really condemned was not Plato (of whom he seems to have known little, or, at any rate, understood little) but 'Platonism':—that over-elaborate and rather abstruse form found in early Islam—for it is an admitted fact that neo-Platonic thought influenced early Islamic thought considerably. That Iqbal was using some philosophical terms in a broad and vague, as opposed to precise, sense is virtually admitted in his own statement in the Introduction to his *Secrets of Self*, where he wrote as follows:—"My criticism of Plato is directed against *those philosophic systems*", (the reader will note the plural, in the words italicised by me) "which would hold up death rather than life as their ideal, and teach us to run away from matter". In other words, with generous inaccuracy he included in the term 'Plato' all thinking which,

in his opinion, was world-denying and transcendent. In this view of the matter it may be scarcely worth while discussing whether Iqbal was justified in castigating this kind of other-worldly thinking. Iqbal can thus be defended from the charge that he was condemning and rejecting Plato on the ground that he did not fully appreciate Plato, and, therefore, could not reject him. If he rejected him, this was—as explained above—because of his loose use of terms, or rather confusion between Plato and neo-Platonism. The point is that to have understood Plato, and then to have denounced him with unrestraint, would be one thing; but to have misunderstood him—or to have confused his teachings with something else—and then to have denounced Plato under that misconception, is wholly another. Iqbal, in this extenuating view of the matter, cannot be charged with being guilty of the former, but of the latter. I do not attempt to justify the misconceptions of Iqbal for the intellectual confusion which made him confuse Plotinus with Plato. But one would accept a plea for extenuation of his mistake on the ground that this academic error is less blameworthy than would have been the mistake had he not confused the two, and still rejected Plato.

## VI

And what about Hafiz, who is declared in the article dealing with him, in an authoritative work as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* as "the greatest writer of *ghazals* and the finest lyric poet that Persia has produced"? Iqbal had handled Hafiz more callously than he had Plato. As Dr. Nicholson reminds us (in the Introduction to his translation into English of Iqbal's *Asrar-e-Khudi*) Iqbal's "criticism" of Hafiz, in the first edition of that poem, "called forth angry protests from Sufi circles in which Hafiz is venerated as a masterhierophant. Iqbal made no recantation, but since the passage had served its purpose, and was offensive to many, he cancelled it in the



second edition of the poem. It is omitted in my translation". Yes, ' the passage had served its purpose ', in the sense that it was so offensive that it had to be cancelled in the second edition, and did not appear in Dr. Nicholson's English translation. And yet who is Hafiz, whom Iqbal so severely traduced and trounced as to have " called forth angry protests from Sufi circles " ? That the great Persian poet is " venerated as a master-hierophant ", by the Sufis, may not have mattered at all to Iqbal. It may be assumed that it did not. But can Iqbal's attitude towards Hafiz be ignored by any critical student of world literature ? Is it not a fact that not only eastern but also western students of Hafiz have entertained the highest regard for him, both as a poet and a spiritual teacher. Let us take first an eastern student of Hafiz. In the course of an inaugural address on " Hafiz and the Place of Iranian Culture in the World "—delivered at the Iran Society (London), in 1936—this is what was said by His Highness the Agha Khan, an Indian by nationality, but an Iranian by race and mother-tongue :—" Hafiz, by far the greatest singer of the soul of man, was the supreme genius of his race. He has always been (as no other great poet can claim to be) the national poet, the national hero, of Iran. One of the greatest of living Hindn statesmen, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, once told me that in all difficult moments of his life he turns to Hafiz. If ever there was a time when we needed the universality of Hafiz as a guiding light, it is to-day when there are forces that threaten the roots of humanity". And is this one of the greatest of poets and spiritual teachers to be condemned and contemned for his universality and versatility by one who could not appreciate the true spirit of the humanism of Hafiz ?

Of the western scholars I shall refer to, and quote from, but two of the most distinguished translators of Hafiz into English. Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, in her

*Poems from the Divan of Hafiz*, had contributed a critical and highly appreciative sketch of the great Persian poet, in the course of which she wrote as follows :—" It is not only as a maker of exquisite verse, but also as a philosopher that Hafiz had gained so wide an esteem in the East ". But the greatest western authority on Hafiz—Col. Wilherforce Clarks, the translator of the complete works of the poet into English, (issued in two big volumes, in 1891)—had recorded his glowing appreciation of Hafiz in the following terms :—

" In Persian literature, no work is more deserving of attention than the work of Hafiz. No one *who really understood Hafiz* (my italics) ever put aside his work without having received real pleasure and true gratification. Hafiz breathes originality in all his works ; scorns to imitate any authority but nature, or to use any art but art to conceal art ; has defects but only his own ; has beauties but only his own. He may be condemned ; he cannot be compared ; in no other country was ever born a genius so rare. His verse is rich in fancy, powerful in imagination, original, sublime, wild and glowing, grave and gay ". Similarly, an old authority on Hafiz, Charles Stewart, wrote of him as follows :—" By his countrymen he (Hafiz) is classed among the inspired and holy men ; and his work is held as inferior only to the Kuran ". And yet it is this, one of the greatest of world-poets, and one of the greatest poetical geniuses that humanity has produced so far, who is *àete noir* to Iqbal, on the fancied ground that the poems of Hafiz had affected for the worse the morale of the peoples of some Muslim countries, who had thereby lost their States. What warrant is there in history for this contention ? None based on any reliable data is forthcoming. Surely, if there was any foundation for it, the people to have been the worst off by reason of the influence of Hafiz on them, would have been the Persians themselves. But had any Persian—be he a historian, poet, politician, or public-

man—ever asserted the view propounded by Iqbal? If so, who was it, and when and where did he do so? Only Echo answers “ who ”, “ when ”, and “ where ”?

## VII

Not only is Iqbal's theory of the decline and fall of some Muslim States and peoples—as the result of the alleged influence, of mysticism on them—wholly unsupported by any reliable historic data and evidence, but equally so is the view propounded by the poet, that Muslim mysticism was derived from, or owed its existence to, Platonism. It had been clearly established, in an earlier chapter of this book, on the basis of the opinion of acknowledged authorities on the subject, that what might be strictly called ‘ Arabian Philosophy ’ was a chapter in the history of Aristotelianism rather than that of Platonism. If some of the Muslim peoples came under the influence of any philosophic system of the Greeks it was that of Aristotle rather than that of Plato. If any further proof were needed, I find the Right Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer Ali, (in his famous work, *The Spirit of Islam*) writes on this subject as follows:—“ Aristotelian philosophy, which was founded on observation and experience, was, however, more akin to the Saracenic genius and the positive bent of the Arab mind. Aristotelian logic and metaphysics naturally exercised a great influence on the conceptions of Arab scientists and scholars. Neo-Platonism, based on intuition, and a certain vague and mystical contemplation, did not take root among the Arabs until it was made popular by the writings of Shihab-ud din Suhrawardi. The Aristotelian conception of the First Cause pervades accordingly many of the philosophical and metaphysical writings of this period”. That is a fact too well known to students of the history of Arabian philosophy, to be challenged successfully by any serious student of the subject.

What justification then is there for Iqbal's theory that it was the teachings of Plato, in general, or even in

particular, that led to the growth, expansion and influence of mysticism among the Muslim peoples, to any appreciable extent? None whatsoever. No commentator on, or interpreter of, Iqbal's views on this subject has at all attempted to discuss this aspect of the question. All of them have assumed the correctness of Iqbal's doctrine, without trying to test its accuracy. The latest interpreter, Mr. G. Sarwar — from whose essay I have quoted in previous chapters — contents himself by simply repeating Iqbal's unproved assertions. What proof — even seemingly convincing, much less absolutely conclusive — is there that Islamic mysticism (the popular name for which is sufism) was derived from or based on Platonism, or that it had ever generated anywhere such a stagnant state of life, as produced "disastrous effect on the Islamic world", so that "no nation anxious for its progress shall have anything to do with it"?

The subject requires further examination. The origin of sufism in the Islamic world, as a religious phenomenon, is a subject of great interest and importance, and, as such, it is dealt with in all standard reference works, whether dealing with religion, in general, or with Islam, in particular. The writers of the articles on sufism in such standard works, in English, as the *Dictionary of Islam* the *Encyclopedia of Islam* and the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, or such oriental authorities (to mention but one, for example) as Mohsin Fani's famous work, in Persian, *Dabistan Mazahib*, do not agree, however, in deriving sufism from a common source. But while that is so, none of these experts and specialists attributes the origin of sufism either solely, or even in an appreciable measure, to the teachings of Plato, or to what may be called "Platonism". That is the essential point to keep in mind. Several writers refer to various sources to find the causes of the rise and growth of sufism — some to certain texts in the Holy Quran itself, (such as the chapter named "Purity", and certain verses in

other chapters), some to the teachings of the revered Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace), some to the influence exerted, on a large scale, by the religion of ancient Iran on Islam, some to the great influence brought to bear on various Islamic peoples (who came to India as travellers and traders, even before the Arab invasion of Sind, in 711 A. D. by the Hindu religious thought and culture, as embodied in the Vedanta and Ynga systems of philosophy, and some to a combination of several or all these sources. But it is significant that no acknowledged authority on sufism, whether in the West or the East, had lent support to the theory propounded by Iqbal about Platonism being the chief source or direct cause of Muslim mysticism, or sufism.

Rather than treat them as poetic license, I have discussed Iqbal's two theories—about the origin of sufism, and its alleged disastrous results on some or all the Islamic peoples—at some length out of regard for, and in honour of, his memory. Otherwise, it would have been unfair to Iqbal who is regarded as a philosophic poet, and who is therefore, entitled to have his philosophic views analysed, sifted and tested with due care and caution rather than brushed aside as poetic license. The result of the examination, I submit has conclusively proved the untenability of the position taken up by him in regard to the origin of Muslim mysticism, and also its alleged disastrous influence on the Islamic peoples. His denunciation, therefore, of Plato amounts almost to an invective. It is Mr. Anwar Beg, who quotes the poet's dictum that Plato was "the leader of the old herd of sheep", and it is Mr. Sarwar, who reminds us that the poet was "the deadly foe of Platonism". These extracts serve to prove, judged by any reasonable standard or criterion, the unreasonableness and unsoundness of Iqbal's opinions that are expressed in his philosophical prose works in English, and in his Persian and Urdu works in verse. And if this was the fate, at the

hands of Iqbal, of Greek philosophy, in general, and of poor Plato, in particular, one is not likely to be surprised when told by Mr. Bég that the poet "equally deprecated Hindu and Buddhist philosophy". That may well be taken for granted, for is not philosophy the result of free thought, and did not Iqbal declare in one of his poems that "free thinking is the invention of the Devil" (*Azadi-e-afkar hai iblès ki ijad*)? In the next chapter I shall discuss at some length whether—apart from the question of the soundness or unsoundness of his views on the origin and effect of snism—his attitude towards it was justifiable in one who claimed to interpret and expound Islam.

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Iqbal's Attitude towards Mysticism or Sufism.

"As for the poets, they that follow them go astray".

—*The Holy Qur'an.*

"Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,  
Or any searcher know by mortal mind ?  
Veil after veil will lift—but there must be  
Veil upon Veil behind".

—Edwin Arnold (*The Light of Asia*).

"There was a door to which I found no key,  
There was a veil through which I might not see".

—Fitzgerald (Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*).

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform ;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm. '

—Cowper (*Olney Hymns*).

"It is, thanks to its mysticism, that Islam has become an international and universal religion".

—Louis Massignon (in his *Essai Sur les origines du lexique de la mystique musulmane*).

"Mysticism is not an isolated phenomenon confined to one school or one faith. On the contrary, it is the touchstone which resolves the ancient sectarian controversies, and provides a common inspiration for a common humanity".

—Dr. A. J. Arberry (in his *Introduction to the History of Sufism*).

"Never was the spirit born ; the spirit shall cease to  
be never ;

Never was time it was not ; end and beginning are  
dreams ;

Birthless, and deathless, and changeless remaineth the  
spirit for ever ;

Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house  
of it seems."

—Elwin Arnold (*The Song Celestial :  
or the Bhagvad Geeta*).

"Where there is no vision, the people perish. The mystics  
are the channels through which a little knowledge filters down  
into our universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical  
world would be a world totally blind and insane."

—Aldous Huxley (*Grey Eminence*).

"And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, and objects of all thought ;  
And rolls through all things."

—Wordsworth (*Tintern Abbey*).

Our birth is a sleep and a forgetting :  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star  
Hath had elsewhere its sitting, and cometh from afar :  
Not in entire forgetfulness, and not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come.  
From God, who is our home.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Those obstinate questionings of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings ;  
Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realised.

—Wordsworth (*Intimations of Immortality*).

## II

I may begin a discussion of Iqbal's attitude towards  
mysticism, or sufism, by quoting the observations of a  
distinguished Indo-Muslim scholar—Sir Ahmed Hussain  
(Nawab Amin Jung Bahadur):—"All religions of the world  
have their roots in the religious sentiment. Indeed, there  
could have been no religion, if instincts had not evolved



such a sentiment. 'There are mystics'—though few and far between—in all religions and countries of the world. Islamic mysticism has played a great part in the development of Muslim culture. In order to appreciate the latter, it is necessary to understand the former. 'Through the course of Islamic history, Islam's culture was challenged, but never overpowered, for Sufi and other mystical thought had always given it that strength and power which no challenge could destroy'—declared Professor Gibbs at the Oxford University Majlis, in February 1942. Even if one be unable to cooer with the high-sounding claim of modern Sufis, none can demur to Professor Gibbs' statement that *tasawwuf* (or Sufic mysticism) has ever been a tower of strength to Islam throughout its history". This view so clearly expressed by Sir Ahmed was at one time the view of Iqbal himself—while he was studying at Cambridge, as testified to by Dr. McTaggart in his letter to Iqbal, and quoted by the latter, without challenge, in an article written by him, detailed reference to which is given in Professor Sharif's exposition of Iqbal's philosophical developments, and summarized by me in an earlier chapter. But Iqbal completely renounced mysticism on his return to India, in 1908, and in his first poem in Persian (*Asrar-i-Khudi*), which was published in 1915, he made a vehement attack on Sufism, in general, and on one of its chief exponents, the great poet, Hafiz, in particular. This roused such indignation in Sufi circles, and evoked such emphatic and vigorous protests, that Iqbal bowed before the storm, and excised, in the second edition, the passages to which exception had been taken. Professor Nicholson, in his English rendering of Iqbal's poem, in 1920, did not translate the omitted passages, but only mentioned in his Introduction the facts set out above.

But though Iqbal omitted the specific passages which were objected to, many of his poems are strewn with

serious reflections on Platonism and sufism, and some of these, I have quoted in the earlier chapters. I propose to discuss now to what extent, if any, Iqbal's attitude towards sufism was correct, and whether his strictures on it were well founded. To be able to appreciate the position one should keep in view the observations made in the quotation with which I opened this chapter—from two articles on "Islamic Mysticism", contributed to *Islamic Culture* (1941-2) by Sir Ahmed Hnssain (the author of a remarkable work called, *The Philosophy of Faquirs*, who reviewed in the same periodical a book by another Indo Muslim scholar, Dr. Burhan Ahmed Farugi, called *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*. This book is the result of considerable research, and attempts to work out the conception of *tawhid* in the system of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, 971—1034, A. H., known as the Mujaddid—perhaps the greatest representative of Islamic dogmatics produced by India. The book seeks to determine the source of *wahdat-i-wujud* (unityism in mystic and philosophic thought, maintaining that it is fundamentally different from the purely Islamic conception of *tawhid*. Further, it concisely deals with *wahdat-i-wujud*, as it occurs in the system of Shaikh Arabi, perhaps the greatest systematic exponent of sufism in the Islamic world. The book, however, is a justification of Islamic dogmatism against the doctrines of the free thinking cult of the Sufis, as developed by them in their theory of *wahdat-i-wujud* (also called *tawhid-i-wjudi*, which means "unity of being", or in one word—"unityism". This conception that the "Existent is One", becomes later "identityism", that the existent is identical with everything, which still later becomes pantheism—that is "All is God and God is All". It is against this sufistic development that the Indo-Muslim theologian, Shaikh Ahmed—who was born at Sirhind, in the Punjab, and who lived during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir—raised the banner of revolt with his slogan of "Back to Early Islam"—just as

Iqbal did, in our own time. Hence the importance of this discussion.

On the contrary, the thirteenth century Spanish-Arab philosopher, Ibn Arabi—whose philosophy had recently formed the text of a penetrating analysis by Dr. Affifi in his *Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Arabi*, and who is revered amongst the sufis as "the great Shaikh"—had declared that Being is only one, and that, therefore, the Creator and the created are of the same essence (which corresponds to the Hindoo doctrine of Vedantism). This doctrine had been accepted by the generality of mystics, all over the Islamic world, and is called *wahdat-i-wujud* ("unityism"). It was against this doctrine of Ibn-Arabi that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, raised the standard of revolt, with his slogan "Back to Early Islam". Dissatisfied that "a pantheistic deity had been substituted for the monotheistic, personal, transcendent. God of Islam" by Ibn-Arabi, and his successors, Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi, offered vehement opposition, and sought to show that the God of Islam, according to him, was transcendent and not immanent, and that the unity which Ibn Arabi had declared was only apparent (*wahdat i Shuhud*), and not real. The reality, (according to the Indo-Muslim theologian), as he understood the Prophet to have declared, was that the Creator and the created were two, and not that "Being" was only one. In other words, the true doctrine, according to the Shaikh Sirhindi, was that the Creator and the created are not one but two, and that God should not be conceived of as one and the same with those whom he creates.

Now only those well-versed in philosophy can fully appreciate that the boundary lines between theism and pantheism are undistinguishable, like those of the seven colours of the rainbow; and I must necessarily remain so for all time. The word, Sheikh Ahmed of Sirhind proclaimed, was not one with God, it was but the shadow of God

(*zill*). In other words God was—in philosophic parlance—transcendent, and not immanent, as held by Ibn-Arabi, and the sufis. As such God cannot be the object of any personal experience : " He the Holy One is beyond the Beyood, again beyond the Beyond, again beyond the Beyond ". God, being thus unknowable, can be realised only by revelation and by faith ; so declared the Mujaddid, the great Sheikh of Sirhind ; thus taking us back to revelation. In other words, the Indian Sheikh was the exponent of religious dogmatics, as is Iqbal in his poems. It is, therefore, that reference to the Sheikh's doctrine is germane to a study of Iqbal's poems. The Mujaddid, who—as stated above—lived in the times of the heterodox Akbar, and the rationalist Jahangir, saw dogmatic Islam suffer seriously by the advance of pantheistic sufism, and equally by the indifferent attitude towards orthodoxy of these two Emperors. He thus took up the cudgels in defence of orthodox Islam, and ultimately carried his point in the reign of Jahangir. But though he had succeeded, he really left to India—as was left by other dogmatists to other Islamic countries—the legacy of a keen controversy in Islamic philosophy between theism and pantheism, as evidenced by the production of a vast bulk of polemical literature on the subject.

Dr. Faruqi sums up his views as follows :—" the Mujaddid (Sheikh Ahmed) brought the Islamic kingdom of India back to Islam ", and so " he undermined the whole structure of mysticism in its very foundation, viz., its pantheism ", while Ibn-Arabi's " sole guide was inner light ". The learned author's sympathies are clearly with Sheikh Ahmed, the dogmatist, and not with Ibn-Arabi, the rationalist, who reasoned out for himself under the guidance of his " inner light ". And yet has any enlightened and sensible man—Muslim or non-Muslim—ever declared that dogmatism, based on unreasoned faith, is to be preferred over

the dictates of reason? The Sheikh of Sirhind "brought the Islamic kingdom of India back to Islam", but what led to the downfall of "the Islamic kingdom of India", not long after the death of Aurangzeb, the greatest believer in dogmatism, if not acting up to the dictates of dogma against reason? And who does not know that some Islamic countries—like Turkey, Egypt, and Iran—have in recent years progressed to the extent that they have discarded dogmatism, and betaken themselves to rationalism—Turkey fully, and Egypt and Iran partially.

Dr. Faruqi assumes that what Sheikh Ahmed preached and taught was right and sound, because he succeeded in influencing Jahangir on the side of orthodoxy. But even in the domain of philosophy the Sheikh's appeal, though successful for a time, was not calculated to advance humanity, since dogmatism is but poor substitute for the process of reasoning out the Divine—even though it may lead ultimately to mysticism. Now mysticism—when all is said and done—is not only a very important but an ineradicable phase in human evolution, more specially on the emotional side of human nature; and several varieties of it have manifested themselves not only in Islam, but also in other religions—notably Christianity and Hinduism. In the former, the "Christian mysticism"—as adumbrated in the Gospel of St John—is an important element in the growth of Christianity; while in Hinduism mysticism itself is the basis of the chief philosophical system—the Vedant. Mysticism may thus be justly regarded as the birthright of humanity, and it is seriously open to doubt whether the dominance over it of orthodox dogmatism has been, on the whole, to the advantage of the followers of any religion—in India, or in any other country.

Unfortunately, Muslim dogmatists have never appreciated the true significance and innate force of mysticism (popularly known as *tasawwuf*), which has persisted in the

history of Islam all through the ages, in spite of the openly hostile outbursts of orthodoxy against it, from time to time. But mysticism in Islam, though submerged, has never been drowned—in spite of all opposition to it, not excluding Iqbal's—and sufis had preferred martyrdom rather than conform to orthodoxy. This is because mystical experience is primarily a psychological phenomenon of human nature, its doctrine being concerned essentially with a metaphysical problem, which is bound to recur at all times, and in various forms. In fact, mystical experience is as old as humanity itself, nor is it confined to any one racial stock, or creed. It is, therefore, that the various attempts of the orthodox dogmatists have always failed to suppress this primal instinct of mankind. It is for the same reason that the highest form of Hindunism (known as Vedantism) is, in essence, mysticism. In Christianity also, mysticism appears very early in St John, in the well-known words : “ except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ”, and in St. Paul : “ the fruit of the spirit is love, love is the fulfilling of the law ; law and love and light are fused into one ”. And so they are. Islamic mysticism or sufism, which theologians and dogmatists had tried to nproot, has persistently appeared in Muslim history, because, it is a manifestation of no other than the divine instinct of mankind . Thus it is that though time crumbles, and the limits of Eternity vanish ; the moment remains, for the moment is Eternity. In its indivisible light all that was, that is, and that will be, appears one and united . The very first line of one of the most famous autobiographies—*Confessions of St. Augustine*—strikes the true mystical note :—“ Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee ”. That is not only Christian mysticism, but Hindu Vedantism and also Islamic sufism. It is this instinctive spirit of humanity which finds expression in the *Auguries of Innocence* of the mystic poet, William Blake, when he sang, that only if you were so minded, you could :—

( See a world in a grain of sand,  
 And a Heaven in a wild flower,  
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,  
 And Eternity in an hour. )

But the dogmatic theologians, of all creeds, would not understand this eternal verity, would not even attempt to understand it, but would ever endeavour to fight it out, with disastrous results to their own faith. That is a great tragedy in history, and the cause of much that is deplored by the historian of civilisation. In the opening paragraph of this chapter, I have referred to, and quoted from, Sir Ahmed Hussain's articles on "Islamic Mysticism", in which he discusses with great lucidity and remarkable catholicity the integral unity and oneness of higher thought in all the fully developed religions of the world. He rightly points out that the difference between the orthodox Islamic theism, and the sufiistic pantheism, is really not so great, or so essential, as is made out to be by those who do not possess a philosophically trained mind to see the true inwardness of things. He correctly stresses this point by remarking that while orthodox Muslim theism is based on the view expressed in the formula *hama uz oost* ("all is from God and God is above all"), the sufi view is embodied in the formula *hama oost* ("all is God and God is all") — the former (theistic view being represented by the seventeenth century Indian exponent of Muslim orthodoxy, the Sirhindi Shaikh, and the latter by the thirteenth century Spanish-Arab Shaikh — Ibn Arabi. He further points out that there is a third school, which "does not see any but verbal differences between the two doctrines of pantheism and theism", and they reconcile them in panentheism, in their formula *hama under oost wa under hama oost* ("all is in God and God is in all") — since "according to them the relation between God and the world is like that of the soul and the body — distinguishable as two, yet inseparably one, and one whole only". It would thus be seen that, as expressed by me

above, the boundary lines between theism on the one hand, and pantheism and panentheism, on the other, are, and are bound to continue to be, indistinct, shading off from the one into the other. As Sir Ahmed well sums up : " This shows how universal is the religious sentiment, and how the views of the relation of God and the world vary according as the religions thinker lays stress on some one of the three elements of the religious sentiment "—namely, " the knowledge side, the feeling side, or the striving side ".

But that is not all for, as Sir Ahmed points out, all these three slightly different but closely allied manifestations of the human spirit, that have found expression in Islam, are also to be found equally clearly in higher Hinduism. Thus he asserts, with good reason, that the Sirhindi Shaikh's theistic view of orthodox Islam corresponds to the "*duvait* view of Sri Madhavachari", " the Sevellian Spanish Arab Shaikh's to the *advait* view of Sri Shankarachari, and the panentheistic view (of the " modern *saliks*, headed by Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi" to " the *vishist advait*, doctrine of Sri Ramanujachari". Viewed in this light, there is evidently much in common between Islamic philosophy as developed under the influence of mystic idealism, and the various schools of the followers of Vedantism amongst the Hindus. A study of Comparative Religion in Europe has long since led to the appreciation of these facts in the West, and the result of it manifested itself, in English literature, in Tennyson's *Higher Pantheism* in which that poet laureate expressed, in beautiful terms, the Vedantic and sufistic doctrine, in the memorable lines :—

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and spirit with spirit  
can meet—

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and  
feet.

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man  
cannot see ;

But if we could see and hear this Vision—were it not  
He ?



Enough has been said to show that in taking up the attitude of bitter opposition to Platonism and sufism, in his poems, Iqbal erred grievously. It was a serious defect alike in his poetry and philosophy. In adopting such an attitude towards Plato—who was to Tennyson "Plato the wise, the first of those who know", and to whom we should "lend an ear"—and also towards the greatest Sufi lyricist, Hafiz, Iqbal missed a golden opportunity of building up a philosophy which, if enshrined in his fine verses, might have appealed to a large section of cultured humanity, not only among non Muslims, but among Muslims as well, for it is a Muslim poet who sang, centuries before Tennyson, and expressed the highest human emotion about the Divine in the well-known verso:—

جان عالم گو یمش کز ربط جان دادم به تن  
دردل هر دزد هم پنهان وهم پیدا شنی

("I would have called Thee the soul of the Universe, if I but knew the relation between the soul and the body, for Thou art both hidden and manifest in the heart of every atom in this universe").

To the indiscriminating admirers of Iqbal's dogmatism, and his bitter opposition to the idealism of sufistic philosophy, I may commend the following historically well-founded observations of the Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer Ali, in his *Spirit of Islam*:—"The benefits conferred by the nobler type of idealistic philosophy are too great to be ignored; and the idealism of Averroes developed in Europe the conception of Universal Divinity. Christian Europe owes its outburst of subjective pantheism,—and its consequent emancipation from the intense materialism of a mythological creed—to the engrafting of Moslem idealism on the western mind. It was the influence of Averroistic writings that attracted the attention of reflecting people to the great problem of the connection between the worlds of matter

and of mind, and revived the conception of an all-pervading spirit ". It is because Iqbal not only ignored, but so emphatically opposed and condemned, " the nobler type of idealistic philosophy " in Islam, that his works are lacking in that spirit of universality which appeals to the philosophic mind. This point is discussed by me at some length in later chapters—particularly in that in which I have instituted a comparison between Iqbal and some of the admittedly great poets of the world, and also in the penultimate chapter of this book in which I have dealt with the claim set up, on behalf of Iqbal, that he was a humanist, and should be judged as such rather than as a poet, in the ordinary sense of that word.

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Iqbal's works and Non-Muslim Readers.

"He (Iqbal) writes as a Muslim, and writes for the Muslim".

—Mr. G. Sarwar in *S. P. Shah In Memoriam Volume on*  
"Some Aspects of Iqbal's Poetry".

"There is first the literature of *knowledge*, and secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach* and the function of the second is to *move*. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy. Books propose to *instruct* or to *amuse* (us). All that is literature seeks to communicate power; all that is not literature seeks to communicate knowledge".

—De Quincy in *Essay on Pope and Letters to a Young Man*.

"Literature exists to please—to lighten the burden of men's lives, to make them, for a short while, forget their sorrows and their sins, their silenced hearths, their disappointed hopes, their grim futures; and those men of letters are best loved who have best performed literature's truest office".

—Lit. Hon'ble Augustine Birrell (*Essay on*  
"The Office of Literature").

## II

I shall discuss in this chapter the value of Iqbal's work with special reference to non-Muslims. After all Urdu, or Hindustani, is the language of Hindustan, and Hindustan is the land not only of Muslims but also of those others who still constitute the great majority of its population, and after whom the country had been called Hindustan by the Arabs and Persians themselves, ever since their first appearance on the soil of India. Now where do the Hindus come, in Iqbal's sweep of poetic vision, or range of philosophic thought? I shall quote a fairly long passage from Mr Akbar Ali's book, mentioned before:—"Even in these days of acute communal struggle, when a prejudice

exists in the mind of the non-Muslims against the poet on account of his tenacious adherence to the cause of Muslim right, we find that the Hindus of Northern India know and recite his songs of patriotism like 'Our India', 'The New Temple', 'The Picture of Pain', 'The Song of the Indian', 'The National Song of Indian Children', 'Swami Ram Tirath Ram', 'The Himalayas', his translation in Urdu verse of *Gaitri mantara* entitled 'The Sun', and his well-known symbolical poem, 'The Cries of a Bird'. Their complaint is that the poet has no attachment left for the land of his birth, and for Indian nationality; and they opine that he is a thorough-going pan-Islamist, writing for the benefit and uplift of the Turk, the Persian, the Afghan, and the Egyptian, rather than of the Indian *qua* Indian. This impression has not failed to create in the minds of the non-Muslims in India a prejudice against the poet, and with a few honourable exceptions, the non-Muslims do not care to study his works".

Those who have followed so far the discussion of the subject will have no difficulty in accepting the view that it is not at all the fault of the non-Muslims, in India, if they do not care to read Iqbal's works, as they are not attracted to them. Admittedly the vast bulk of his poetry is in Persian, which was officially abolished as the court language in Upper India, so far back as 1837, and which had, consequently, long since ceased to be cultivated by the vast majority of the Hindus connected with the law-courts and administration. If Iqbal deliberately chose to write only for the Muslims abroad—it matters little whether he succeeded or failed in his effort—and not for his non-Muslim fellow-countrymen, he has to thank himself if the latter would not now learn Persian to study and appreciate his many works in the classical language of Iran. As regards his poetry in Urdu, the greater part of it is vitiated (as shown earlier) by serious defects of vocabulary,

subject and style, and the Hindu cannot be expected to be singing perpetually the, at best, one dozen songs, enumerated in the extract already made from Mr. Akbar Ali's book. Two of them have been sung at the opening sessions of the Indian National Congress, when held in Upper India, where only is literary Hindustani, or Urdu, such as Iqbal wrote, more or less understood. But there can be no two opinions that Iqbal, whether deliberately or otherwise, ignored the literary needs of non-Muslims, and none of his admirers should, therefore, be surprised to find that his works are not known, to the extent to which Iqbal's votaries would like them to be read and appreciated, to students of Urdu literature, among non-Muslims.

### III

It is very well known that whatsoever the reason or cause of their attitude, and howsoever justifiable or otherwise their position, the educated Hindus, in particular, and now even the Hindu masses, in general, are literally imbued with the ideals and inspirations of nationalism, and earnestly aspire to be politically free—like those peoples who live in Europe and America, or China and Japan in Asia. Any Indian poet, therefore, who whether openly, or by implication, will preach against nationalism, or deprecate it, or advocate only religious internationalism (as did Iqbal) must run the risk of being unpopular with the Hindus. Now, Iqbal's political outlook being that of a Muslim-confederalist, I do not see why the Hindus should be held inappreciative or blame-worthy, if the poet (by reason of the choice of subject, language, style, and point of view,) did not care to appeal to their emotions and sentiments. No wonder then if his poetry fails to appeal to the present-day Urdu-knowing Hindus, in general, and the communally-minded among them, in particular. The world of Indian literature and scholarship sustained a heavy loss in the premature death, in 1938, of

the Panjabi Professor, Dr. Ziauddin, of Tagore's famous University, at Shantiniketan, in Bengal. He contributed to the *Vishva-Bharti Quarterly* a masterly survey of Iqbal's poetry and message, which was written while the poet was alive, but which appeared soon after his death. I am quoting below some extracts from it which will throw a flood of light on the point I am now discussing :—" I have not come across any final and unambiguous statement made by Iqbal on the problem of nationalism for Indian Muslims. It is, however, clear, that he wants them to keep the structure of their society sharply defined from those of other communities. In India, unity of Muslims with other communities can only be on economic and political grounds, and not on social and cultural. The position (of Iqbal's) *vis-a-vis* the British is clear. They have usurped the freedom of Muslims in India. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every Muslim to win back that freedom. But on what terms of compromise should Hindus and Muslims unite to rule India, when freedom is got, is not clear. Nor does Iqbal seem to put any light on this question".

Well, if Iqbal did not do so, and left in his political philosophy a system in which there is apparently no room for the non-Muslims—what wonder if the latter fight shy of it, and also of the vast bulk of the poet's works which is enshrined in the foreign idiom of Persia? It would thus be seen that Iqbal's political philosophy—as interpreted by Dr. Ziauddin—was as barren for the non-Muslim, as is for him, much of the poet's philosophy of religion. As regards the slender legacy left by Iqbal in Urdu, its subject-matter, vocabulary, and style, have all been discussed, and it has been shown that the themes of the vast bulk of his poems, no less than his vocabulary, are mostly non-Indian, and his style based on foreign models. In view of these incontrovertible facts, it should cause no surprise if—in

the words of Mr. Akbar Ali—"the non-Muslims do not care to study his works, with a few honourable exceptions". So far then as the vast majority of the people of India are concerned, Iqbal's poetry and philosophy are such as make no appeal to, and have no attraction for, them. As lucidly explained by a highly qualified authority, Sir Bomanji Wadia—Vice Chancellor of the Bombay University—in the course of an article on "Qualities of Great Literature", contributed to the *Hindustan Review* (for September, 1942) "the test of great literature is *universality and lastingness of appeal to the widest human interests* (my italics) against which time and change of fashion seem powerless". And it is the contention in this chapter that it is because such an "appeal to the widest human interests" is largely lacking in Iqbal's poetry, that it fails to attract non-Muslims. How far the contention is sustainable, on the materials brought together in this volume, it is for the reader to judge for himself. But to assist him in arriving at a correct conclusion, I may refer, before concluding this chapter, to the contentions and argument of Iqbal's admirers, as represented by the latest writer on this point.

#### IV

The undiscerning admirers of the poet lay great stress on the view they propound that Iqbal is not only a poet of Nature, but one on the same high level as Shelley and Wordsworth. Assuming, but not admitting the allegation to be correct, the fact remains that even if it be so, the vast bulk of Iqbal's poems are in Persian, and as such, can make no appeal to the vast majority of non-Muslim Indians who, to put it broadly, are now almost wholly unfamiliar with that language. One such admirer of the poet may be taken as representing the type of critics who would group Iqbal with Wordsworth as a poet of Nature. I shall quote his observations in full. He writes :—"Iqbal, like Wordsworth, is a great poet of Nature. He has

the eye of an artist, and interprets all the fine shades of colour in Nature. He is a minute observer of its doings, and a keen student of its manifestations. Clouds, stars, mountains, trees, flowers, and streams, attract his imagination most. He catches a glimpse of the landscape, an outline of the mountain peak, or a momentary gleam of the sea, and straight-way busies himself with his impressions. His imaginative impressions are remarkable and superb. His everlasting hills stand and wait in their places till their shapes are fixed in our memories. The poet has time to paint them, and we know and love the picture. How beautifully he describes the Himalayas. Its vastness and majesty are brought home to us. Its importance as an impregnable bulwark, its height and perennial snow-whiteness, its hidden treasure, the source of fountain from which have gushed out rivers and pools, all these have been presented with poetic skill and dexterity". Next, he asserts that an Urdu poem of Iqbal's—called "The Cloud"—"can be spoken of in the same breath as that of Shelley". After declaring his conviction that "as a descriptive painter Iqbal stands supreme", and that "he presents the same vividness and charm which Turner—the great painter—did well with his tool of colour and brush", the writer proceeds to pronounce the verdict that "the words of the great romantic poet, Coleridge, will convey a real significance of Iqbal's use of imagery" in that poem—"The Cloud". From Coleridge, the writer harks back to Wordsworth, and declares that "rest and peace of the evening is beautifully given expression to—just like Wordsworth's 'Upon Westminster Bridge'—in a superb style"! I shall offer no comment at length as many of these poems have been brought together in an earlier chapter in English translation, and the reader who knows Wordsworth and Shelley can form his own opinion about Iqbal's position as a poet



of Nature, or a romantic poet like Coleridge. But it may strike one's mind that had Iqbal been as a poet of Nature on a par with Wordsworth and Shelley, and with Coleridge as a romantic poet, would the literary world in India be so indifferent to the study of Iqbal's poems as is the case, except in the circles devoted to the cult of the poet ?

Those discriminating critics of literary movements in India, who are familiar with the conditions obtaining in the country, are fully aware that it is the order of the day—among Hindus and Muslims alike—to institute unwarranted comparisons between writers they wish to exalt and their compeers they fancy in European literature. Thus—to refer particularly to the literary conditions of Bengal—Michael Madhusudan Dutta is generally spoken of in that province, as "the Milton of Bengal", and several other Bengalee poets, in similar fashion. This habit has been slowly spreading from Bengal to other provinces, and I have noticed similar assertions being made about writers in the other modern languages in this country. So long, therefore, as the correct critical perspective is maintained, no one need take seriously such assertions about Iqbal, or any other author. But the reader who is familiar with the descriptions of Nature in the poems of Kalidas, particularly in the *Meghadoot*, or "The Cloud Messenger", or in the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das, is not likely to be swept off his feet by the statements of the writer I have quoted above. And even at its highest, the argument in favour of Iqbal as a great poet of Nature, does not amount to much, since the number of such poems composed in Urdu—with which alone we are concerned, in so far as the Hindu reader is concerned—is admittedly small, being not more than, at the highest reckoning, a dozen. In the circumstances, it may safely be held that there is not much in Iqbal's Urdu poems to appeal to the Hindu reader as poetry of Nature, even

assuming, for the sake of argument, that he is as great a poet, as Wordsworth, or Shelley, or Coleridge—taking them either individually or collectively.

## V

I shall next deal with that group of Iqbal's poems which are characterized by his admirers as nationalist or patriotic. The most important in this group, is that known as *Hindustan Hamara* ("Our India"). It certainly comes well within the category of poems which deserve to be called nationalist or patriotic. There is no jarring note in it to hurt the feelings of any Indian, whatever his race or creed, and it should have long since been—as it well deserves to be—adopted as the national anthem of India. I have no doubt that it would have secured that position the more firmly, were it not for two circumstances—partly its vocabulary, in some of the verses, is inflated by the use of Persian words not easily understood by the average Hindu, and more largely because of the poet having composed later another poem openly contradicting what he had sung in "Our Hindustan". That Iqbal was by no means incapable of composing verses in Urdu, without interlarding them with words from foreign vocabulary, with the result that they sounded all the sweeter to Hindu ears, owing to their containing simple words from purely indigenous Indian sources, is known to students of the poet. I shall quote but two examples:—

اقبال بڑا اپن بے شک ہے      من بادوں میں مڑہ لیتا ہے

(Iqbal is a great preacher, who fascinates one with his talk).

شکنی ہی شانتی ہی بھگنوں کے گیت میں ہے  
دعوتی کے باسیوں کی مکنی پر بت میں ہے

Power and peace consist in the hymns of the votaries.

The salvation of the inhabitants of the earth lies in love.

In the above extracts all the words are purely Indian, which shows that if he but cared to do so, Iqbal could have composed a truly national song for India, which would have appealed to the largest section of Urdu-knowing Indians. But, making allowance for its inevitable shortcomings, Iqbal's "Our India" offers us the nearest approach to a national anthem which has yet been composed. It may be mentioned that during the second Great War Iqbal's poem in question received a high compliment when it was being sung from about half a dozen mutually warring radio stations—the Allied and the Axis propagandists being equally anxious to exploit it for gaining the sympathy of Urdu-knowing Indians. But, very unfortunately, Iqbal composed later another Urdu song, the opening words of which are:—"China and Arabia are ours, so is Hindustan; we are Muslims, and the whole world is our native land". As a result of it, the Hindu has stood perplexed ever since, doubting the genuineness of the sentiment embodied in the earlier song, *Hindustan Hamara*. For the Hindu to be called upon to sing "Our India" either side by side with, or before or after, the other song about China, Arabia, and the rest of the world (including, of course, India), would be not only to play with facts, but render the poor Hindus' position obviously ridiculous. In view of these facts and considerations, it is not surprising that Iqbal's earlier poem, *Hindustan Hamara*, had failed to achieve its object. This, to my mind, is highly regrettable. But if after having summoned all Indians to the call of their native land, the poet chose to put China and Arabia, and the rest of the world, on the same level with India (on the ground that the whole world was the native land of the Muslims) this sentiment, however, pleasing or palatable to the latter was, in the nature of things, bound to be distasteful to the Hindus, since it could make no appeal to their nationalist or patriotic sentiments. That was bound to be the natural reaction, in so far as the Hindu was concerned; and so it has been.

The difference in the sentiments expressed in the two poems—the one exalting India, every particle of the dust of which is a deity, and the other in which China and Arabia, equally with India, are hailed as *watan*, namely motherland—is so patent that even he that runs may read. And yet indiscriminate admirers of Iqbal are never tired of defending the poet by attacking those who point out the marked change in his sentiments. The latest writer of this group had expressed himself as follows:—“There are some whose minds are so shattered in that they see a contradiction between the two anthems. But there is none. For Iqbal was also a firm internationalist believing in the brotherhood of Islamic nations. There was no intention whatsoever in Iqbal’s mind or philosophy, as narrow-minded bigots try to make out, of conquering countries for Islam. All that Iqbal means is that Islamic fraternity is world-wide.” The writer represents that type of Iqbal’s votaries whose chief business in life is an uncritical laudation of the poet, coupled with an equally uncritical denunciation of his discriminating critics, in language of which the passage quoted above, may be taken as a fair sample. Members of this group cannot realize that hard, or harsh, expression like “shattered in minds”, “narrow-minded bigots”, and many more of that class and kind—break no bones in intellectual discussions. No one charges Iqbal with having expressed the sentiment (in the later poem) of the conquest of the whole world for or by Islam, as the writer had wrongly assumed. The point of the criticism is that having justly exalted India, in the earlier poem, the poet had turned later to lands other than his own, and claimed them, *to be his native land on the same footing as India*. It is this—and not the suggestion of any Islamic conquest—that is brought up against Iqbal; and the point of criticism had not been met so far by any defender of the poet.

## VI

I shall now discuss another Urdu poem by Iqbal, which it is asserted by the poet's admirers is full of nationalist sentiments, and should, therefore, rouse the patriotic emotions of the Hindus, as well. Before making any comments, I would reproduce the stanzas which constitute the pith of the poem :

"Shall I tell thee the truth, oh Brahmin? Be not  
offended.

The idols in thy temples have grown old.

The idols have taught thee to be at feud with thine own  
people ;

I have at last in desperation turned my face from both  
temple and mosque.

In images of stone thou hast conceived the presence  
of God !

For me every particle of my country's dust is a deity ! "

A writer, representing the type of Iqbal's uncritical admirers, says of this poem : " He (Iqbal) stood as an apostle of unity, and proclaimed in his ' New Temple' (or Naya Shivala) to bid eternal farewell to all the vestiges of traditional customs, fetich, dogmas, idolatry, and adoro in its stead every particle of the country's dust as its deity. The ' New Temple' is a clear reflection of Iqbal's passionate love for his country ". On a first glance at the poem—and particularly at the last line, which says that every particle of my country's dust is a deity—it may be urged that the poem is, and may justly be classed as, " patriotic ". But without questioning the genuineness of the poet's motive, or the laudability of his object in composing it, and even accepting all that may be said in its favour as a patriotic poem, the fact remains that the sentiments embodied in it are, to say the least, unfortunate,

since they tend to frustrate the attainment of the very object for which it may be assumed to have been composed. The poet made in it an appeal to the Hindus, through the medium of their priestly caste—the Brahmins—to “ bid eternal farewell to all the vestiges of traditional customs, fetish, dogmas, idolatry, and to adore in its stead every particle of the country’s dust as its deity”—to quote the very words of the commentator. Now “ not to put too fine a point upon it ”—to use with apologies the favourite phrase of Mr. Snagsby, a well-known character in Dickens’s *Bleak House*—was not Iqbal highly tactless when he appealed on these lines to the Hindu, even for the sake of unity? Has any such appeal been ever made in any age, or country, by any one—poet, philosopher, publicist, politician, or publicman—to a people, to make efforts for unity with other communities in a land, on these terms—the forsaking of their traditional customs, and religious beliefs and worship, on the grounds mentioned by the poet? Would there not be a tremendous uproar if any narrow-minded Hindu poet, even though influenced by his nationalistic impulse, made a similar appeal, on what he regarded as patriotic grounds, to other than his own community to unite with the Hindus, forswearing its traditional customs, religious rites, mode of worship, and theological dogmas? All those who appreciate the realities of life in the India of to-day—or for the matter of that in any other country—will give but one unequivocal answer. It would have been quite a different thing—though it would have been even then more utopian—had Iqbal appealed to the people of India, as a whole, without particularising the Hindu community, to secure unity at all cost. But he appealed only to the Hindus to do all that, but not to any others in this country. Hence, the grievance of the Hindus against the poet for what they regard as his narrow-mindedness.

the Hindus are not idolators. This point is discussed at some length in later chapters of this book. But I may quote here a few lines, in support of the statements made by me, from no less authoritative a source than the famous historical work, the *Aiyeen-e-Akbari*, in which Abul Fazl writes of the Hindu and his religion, in the following terms: "They one and all believe in the unity of God; and as to the reverence they pay to images (of stone, and wood, and the like), which simpletons regard as idolatory, it is not so. In all their ceremonial observances and usage, they regard the pure essence of the Supreme Being as transcending the idea of power in operation". In the face of it, and other equally authoritative testimonies, it would be almost impossible to make the Hindu own the soft impeachment that he is an idolator!

By reason of this insurmountable difficulty—the Hindus' tenacity and persistence in declining to consider himself an idolator—it is obvious that if a Muslim poet or preacher desires to influence the Hindus to cultivate a frame of mind likely to be conducive to unity amongst the various communities in India—and more particularly so between the Hindus and the Muslims—it is as incumbent on him to make his appeal with a sympathetic insight into the fundamental tenets of Hinduism, as it is on the Hindu poet or preacher to do the same, in regard to the sublime teaching enshrined in Islam and not traduce it, or its Prophet (on whom be peace). It is such a pity that instead of approaching this delicate subject in the right spirit, many Hindu and Muslim writers resort to methods which usually do more harm than good. The matter is obviously one on which language is to be desired, but not invective, and the greater the position of the writer the higher the standard of responsibility to be expected of him. It is keeping these important considerations in-view that an impartial critic cannot do otherwise than hold that Iqbal

## VII

Now those who have knowledge and experience of advocacy at the Bar, know well enough that much depends on how a case is presented to a court, if a counsel is to carry conviction with it, and how often even a good case is lost because of its being presented tactlessly. In view of this important consideration, it is not at all surprising that Iqbal's call to unity had been lost upon the Hindus, and did not produce any healthy effect ; nor did it stimulate the desired re-action. Nay, if the truth be told, this particular poem when sung in the presence of Hindus, produces undesirable reactions, by acting as an irritant rather than as an emollient. Nor is it a wonder that it should do so. The average Hindu—even when he is advanced—is as sensitive, as is the Muslim, on the question of his religion, religious customs, and mode of worship. To the average Muslim the Hindus are idolators ; and that was clearly the view even of so cultured and enlightened a poet as Iqbal, and is expressed by him in the words, as well as the sentiments of the very poem we are considering. It seems significant to the Hindu, that though Iqbal pretty frequently referred in his poems to his Hindu descent, yet even he was not above cherishing and expressing his opinion of the Hindus being idolators—judging from the words and the sentiments embodied in the poem under discussion, and also in some others. But the Hindu does not believe himself to be an idolator, either in the sense in which Iqbal uses that term, or, for the matter of that, in any other sense. That is his settled conviction—whether he is right or wrong in holding that view is a wholly different matter. Nor is the Hindu likely to be persuaded to accept Iqbal's view of idol-worship, as practised by him, when he finds that distinguished and eminent Muslim authorities—historians, thinkers and scholars—who have closely studied Hinduism, have expressly recorded that



the Hindus are not idolators. This point is discussed at some length in later chapters of this book. But I may quote here a few lines, in support of the statements made by me, from no less authoritative a source than the famous historical work, the *Aiyeen-e-Akbari*, in which Abul Fazl writes of the Hindu and his religion, in the following terms : " They one and all believe in the unity of God ; and as to the reverence they pay to images of stone, and wood, and the like), which simpletons regard as idolatory, it is not so. In all their ceremonial observances and usage, they regard the pure essence of the Supreme Being as transcending the idea of power in operation ". In the face of it, and other equally authoritative testimonies, it would be almost impossible to make the Hindu own the soft impeachment that he is an idolator !

By reason of this insurmountable difficulty—the Hindu's tenacity and persistence in declining to consider himself an idolator—it is obvious that if a Muslim poet or preacher desires to influence the Hindus to cultivate a frame of mind likely to be conducive to unity amongst the various communities in India—and more particularly so between the Hindus and the Muslims—it is as incumbent on him to make his appeal with a sympathetic insight into the fundamental tenets of Hinduism, as it is on the Hindu poet or preacher to do the same, in regard to the sublime teaching enshrined in Islam and not traduce it, or its Prophet (on whom be peace). It is such a pity that instead of approaching this delicate subject in the right spirit, many Hindu and Muslim writers resort to methods which usually do more harm than good. The matter is obviously one on which language is to be desired, but not invective, and the greater the position of the writer the higher the standard of responsibility to be expected of him. It is keeping these important considerations in-view that an impartial critic cannot do otherwise than hold that Iqbal

erred grievously in suggesting, as well as implying, in the poem under discussion, that the Hindu looked upon his idol as God Himself, and also the other sentiments expressed in it. Contrast this regrettable attitude of Iqbal with that of a famous Bengalee convert to Christianity. In his well-known book, — *Bengal Peasant Life* — this is how its author, the Rev. Lrī Behari Day, sums up his views on the fundamental tenets, and the underlying spirit, of Hindnism. After describing the details of a worship conducted in a peasant's house, the author writes :—“ People may call this fetichism if they choose, but it is impossible not to have respect for that deep religiousness which underlies the Hindu character, even in a common Hindu peasant. Though the rites are superstitious, they are not meaningless ; they indicate the existence of an essentially noble and supersensual sentiment ; they show that even in an uneducated peasant there is something ” which is “ an acknowledgement that human happiness is dependent on the smiles of an unseen power, and that all prosperity flows from the bountiful author of all Good ”.

“ Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle ”, thus wrote Macaulay in his essay on Milton. “ Man always worships something ; always he sees the Infinite shadowed forth in something finite ; and, indeed, can and must so see it in any finite thing, once tempt him well to fix his eyes thereon,” is how Carlyle set forth his views. in one of his essays, on the subject of what is popularly called idolatry. These declarations of a highly educated and cultured Hindu convert to Christianity, and of two eminent British essayists, were recently supplemented by others no less emphatic, on the underlying spiritual perception of the Divine in Hinduism. Towards the end of the year 1934,

some Indian topics were discussed in British Broadcasting debates, in London, in connection with "India and Four Freedoms". One of these subjects was Hindu-Muslim relations. Two of the speakers, who took part in the debates, were Lord Lytton, ex-governor of Bengal, and Sir Samuel Runganadhan, the High Commissioner for India. The notable circumstance was that both these speakers were Christians. Lord Lytton is reported to have said :—"From my experience I would say the Hindu community is a very tolerant community, in matters of religion ; largely I think, owing to the fact that the Hindu attitude towards religion is intensely individualistic". He was followed by the High Commissioner for India, who declared his conviction :—"The British Government had greatly helped India in the growth of political freedom. But spiritual freedom is, I think, inherent in Hinduism". Both these statements—of the British Christian, and the Indian Christian—betray a genuine insight into the genius of Hinduism, namely, its characteristic tolerance towards other religions, and spiritual freedom for its own votaries. It is a striking circumstance that while some modern Christians are now advanced enough to appreciate these characteristic features of Hinduism, which have made it imperishable, Islam in India, even under British influence—at any rate, as expounded by Iqbal—should have failed to produce such catholicity and broad-mindedness, as is now noticeable amongst some modern Christians. It may be recalled that nearly a century back, Tennyson, in his *In Memoriam* deprecated the intolerance of the intolerant Christian preachers of his time, in the well-known stanza :—

Oh, thou that after toil and storm  
 May'st seem to have reach'd purer air,  
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,  
 Leave thou thy sister when she prays,

Her early heaven, her happy views ;  
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse,  
 A life that leads melodious days.

But no such message of catholicity and spiritual freedom has yet inspired the verse, or prose, of modern Muslim writers in India, and it is by no means prominent in the poems of Iqbal. That is not the case, however, with the classical poetry of Persia, which is marked by not only a keen but a sympathetic insight into the fundamental principle of religion, as beautifully and concisely expressed by a Persian poet in the well known line :

در دل هر ذره هم پنهان و هم پدید آید

("Thou art concealed and revealed in the heart of every atom").

Or as another Persian poet sang :

که گشته نهان روئے بکس نمانی  
 که در مورد کون و مکان پیدایشی  
 این چاره گردی بخویش بمانی  
 خود عین عیانی و خود پیدایشی

("Sometimes you conceal yourself, and do not reveal your face to any one, while sometimes you make yourself manifest in many a form in this world of time and space ; and that is because you are yourself the seer and the seen " — or, to put it in philosophic terms :—"Thou, the Absolute, art both the Subject and the Object").

The above sentiment, as expressed by a great Muslim poet, had long since found fulfilment in Hinduism, and if the worship consequential to so spiritual an ideal be regarded by ill-informed persons as "fetichism" or "idolatry", the Hindu is content to go his way unmindful of and unconcerned at their ridicule and raillery, secure in his conviction that his religious tenets and mode of worship will be appreciated by those—of whatsoever land or religion—who

have a better and a keener perception of the Divine Reality. Nor is he wrong in the view he takes of his relations to the Universe, which has made him the most tolerant of human beings, in matters of religion. For as another Persian poet had expressed the Hindu view of, what ill-informed persons call, idolatry :

دانی که ز چه روئے گشته ساجد ما  
 بت گدازد به بت پرست کای ما بید ما  
 بوما بجمال خود تجلی کرده است  
 انکس که زست ناظر و ساجد ما

(The idol said to the idol-worshipper : " O my devotee, do you know why you worship me. It is because the One who manifests and reveals Himself through you, He it is who has cast His lustre on me also " ).

That is Hinduism, in its broadest sense ; and those who like Iqbal are desirous of appealing to the religious sentiments and emotions of the Hindus should keep its basic spiritual ideal in view, and try to appreciate it, rather than attempt to brush it aside as " idolatry " or " fetichism ", which must needs be discarded by the Hindus before they may hope for unity with the other communities in this country. Similarly, the Hindu who desires to attain the same object of national unity must equally develop a juster and a more appreciative frame of mind towards the noble spirit, and the sublimity, underlying the fundamentals of Islam, the grandeur of its conception of the Divine, and its universalism in social matters, in which it had risen higher in actual practice than any other religion, oblitterating all distinctions, amongst its followers, of race and colour. Until such a spirit of sympathy, broadmindedness, tolerance, is cultivated by both Hindus and Muslims, it would be idle to expect for anything better in India than what obtains at present. It is because both Hindus and Muslims have failed to develop till now the correct angle

of vision in the appraisal of each others' religion, that things in India are what they are. And it is because Iqbal failed to imbue and inspire his Muse with this right spirit, that even the few poems of his in which he preached nationalism and patriotism, had not succeeded in capturing the imagination of the Urdu-knowing Hindus. His failure, in this respect, should, therefore, serve as a wholesome warning to other poets and preachers, actuated, like Iqbal himself, with the best of intentions and ideals, but likely to jeopardise their chances of success owing to tactlessness, and wrong approach.

What I have stated above as the chief characteristic of Hinduism had been long since testified to by persons of other faiths, who had studied that religion without any preconceived bias. To quote the two latest opinions: Chaudhuri Akbar Khan (President of the Indian Journalists and Writers' Association, London, and also President of the Indian Worker's Federation in Britain) in refuting the allegations of an ignorant traducer of Hinduism, was reported by Reuters (in 1945) to have said:—"Hinduism has remarkable power of assimilation and absorption. Hindus hold no dogma. Their religion is thus wide and elastic. They can adapt themselves according to the times, in the easiest manner. It is only between peoples who hold a set of dogmas that terrible wars had occurred." I shall next quote Mr. Bernard Shaw's tribute to Hinduism. (In his latest work, *Everybody's What's What* (published in 1944), Mr. Shaw states his opinion about Hinduism in the following carefully-considered terms:—"The apparent multiplication of gods is bewildering, at the first glance, but you soon discover that they are all the same God. There is always one uttermost God, who defies personification. This makes Hinduism the most tolerant religion in the world, because its one transcendent God includes all possible gods. In fact, Hinduism is so elastic, and so subtle,

that the most profound methodist and crudest idolators are equally at home in it." An enlightened Indo-Muslim scholar, Mr. M. Mujeeb—in his *Indian Culture*—makes the following observations on the same subject :—" Buddhism lost its hold on the people, when Hinduism absorbed all its potent elements. Hindnism could discover within itself all that appeared vital and attractive in Islam. It was a sign of vigour, not of weakness. It showed that Hinduism was not passive or defeatist, but was creating within itself the qualities that it lacked. Hindnism is a force, and its main direction has been in the past, as it is today, towards unity." These three fair and impartial estimates, by non-Hindus, of Hinduism fully support the contention that so long as that religion retains its essential characteristic of absorbing and assimilating all that is good and great in other religious systems, and in transmuting it into an integral part of itself, it will continue to flourish, as it had done for now seven thousand years, as the result of its constant endeavour to adapt itself to its ever-changing environment. This perpetual adaptation of Hindnism is so rapid, in spite of its conservatism, that it is lost not only upon non-Hindu observers, but upon the Hindus themselves.

---

## CHAPTER XV.

### Iqbal's Legacy and its Future.

"Who says in verse what others say in prose".

—Pope (*Epistles*: "Imitations of Horace".)

"The merit of poetry, in its widest forms, still consists in its truth—truth conveyed to the understanding, not directly by the words, but circuitously by means of imaginative associations, which serve as its conductors".

—Macaulay (*On the Athenian Orators*).

"Poetry should be vital in either stirring our blood by its divine movements, or snatching its breath by divine perfection. To do both is supreme glory; to do either is enduring fame".

—Rt. Hon'ble Augustine Birrell (*Obiter Dicta*:  
"Brownings' Poetry").

## II

The result of a critical study of Iqbal's works and message may now be recapitulated as follows. His two books, in English—*Persian Metaphysics* and *The Reconstruction of Thought in Islam*—are not works of permanent value, and their usefulness is not so much objective as subjective—that is, as indicative of Iqbal's own mentality and philosophic temperament rather than as valuable expositions of the subjects of Islamic Metaphysics and Philosophic Thought. Of the vast bulk of his poetical work which is in Persian—and in which language he wrote almost exclusively for the benefit of the non-Indian Muslims—there is very reliable data available to satisfy an impartial critic that Iqbal's effort had not been successful, to any appreciable extent, either for the purpose of literary evaluation, or propagating his philosophic thought. Though he certainly intended it, there is nothing to show that Iqbal succeeded in influencing, through his Persian poems, the culture and thought of modern Iranians, or Afghans, or Turks. I have read almost all the



English books, published during the current century, in Europe and America, relating to Iran and other Muslim States, but I have not found in any one of them even the name of Iqbal, to say nothing of any reference to him as one who had influenced Muslim ideals and aspirations, or poetry and philosophy, outside India. And yet so great a believer was Iqbal in his own high destiny, when he began to write in Persian, that he felt justified in proclaiming himself a veritable prophet, not only of his own age, but of even that to come. We read in one of his poems:—

I am waiting for the votaries that arise at dawn,  
Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire,  
I have no need of the ear of to-day,  
I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow.

### III

The late Sir Denison Ross, a highly qualified critic of pro Muslim sympathies, had summed up his views on Iqbal's Persian poems with the caustic comment: "I have often wondered whether his method of preaching was most effective he could have chosen; for Persian verse when well-written is so apt to be an end in itself that it makes little practical appeal to the reader." This observation is highly significant. On the contrary, the trends of recent forces and developments, in Muslim countries outside India, seem to be in the opposite direction. We read in a highly informative work—Mr. Mohammad Ali's *Guide to Afghanistan* (issued at Kabul, in 1938:—"Pashtu is the language of the greater part of Afghanistan. Government encourages its diffusion by every means possible. It has been declared that Pashtu will be the official language after three years (that is from 1941 onwards). In primary classes Pashtu is now the medium of instruction." In *Islamic Culture* (for July, 1940) we are informed that "an Afghan Academy was founded in 1931. Originally it was called *Anjuman-e-Adabi* but, ever since Persian has been

replaced as the state-language by Pashtu, the Academy had been renamed ' Pashtu Tulnah '. During the last decade, much of the work was done in Persian. Now, however, greater attention is being paid to Pashtu to make it a befitting national language of the great Afghan nation " The *Islah* (the official organ, published in Persian, from Kabul) now devotes more space to writings in the Pashtu language, and it has set up a Pashtu editorial board. A literary society had also been constituted to study Pashtu literature, and the first meeting of the society was inaugurated by the Minister of Education. In his instructive little book—called *Gold and Guns on the Pathan Frontier*—the author, Mr. Abdul Qaiyum (himself a North-West Frontier man), writes :—  
 " There is a very keen desire among the Pathans (both of Afghanistan and the Frontier) to encourage and enrich their own language, Pashtu. Persian (for centuries the official language in Afghanistan) has been replaced by Pashtu. Pashtu broadcasts have become a daily feature of the Kabul and Peshwar broadcasting stations. Afghan officials are enjoined to learn Pashtu, which is fast replacing Persian as the official language of the Afghans ".

Again, the North West Frontier Province of India, which also has an overwhelmingly large (over 92 per cent.) Pashtu speaking population, has followed the example of Afghanistan. The radio broadcasts from Peshawar—the capital of the province—are now more extensively in Pashtu and Hindustani than in Persian. These facts speak for themselves, and in view of them it is almost impossible to forecast a bright prospect for the study in Afghanistan, and the North West Frontier Province, of Iqbal's voluminous Persian poems. It would be a miracle, indeed, should they continue to be read widely by the Afghans, or the Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province, who are now intensely devoted to the study of Pashtu.

Turkey—under the guidance of its great leader, Kamal Atatürk—had not only replaced the Arabic script by the Roman, but actually weeded out from its vocabulary no less than nearly twenty thousand Arabic and Persian words, which had been in use in the literature of Turkey for centuries. In the course of a statement made by the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation—which visited India, early in 1943—he pointed out that the purification of Turkish from foreign influences was one of the six fundamental principles of Kemalism. He developed this point as follows :—“ There existed in the past a marked difference between the spoken and written Turkish language. Arabic and Persian words were employed in the language in accordance with the particular rules of their respective grammar. For example, the plural of an Arabic or Persian word was formed according to Arabic or Persian grammatical rule. The reform of the language aimed at :—(a) preserving in the Turkish language certain Arabic and Persian words, but subject to the rules of Turkish grammar; (b) giving preference in the spoken language to words of Turkish origin; (c) forming new words hitherto unused, from the sources of the Turkish language; (d) adopting scientific and technical terms of Greek and Latin origin, which were already in general international use and (e) nationalising the vocabulary by the use of the Latin alphabet. The adoption of the Roman script in Turkey had helped to raise the standard of literacy to a high level. The elimination of Arabic and Persian words had enabled the Turks to build up a really national language. There were still a few Arabic and Persian words in the Turkish language, but those were like foreign words in any European language.” Another member of the same deputation, speaking at Bombay, on “ The Change of Script in Turkey,” explained the reform now brought about, in the following terms :—“ Before the advent of Kemal Atatürk, the Turks were speaking the Turkish language containing

replaced as the state-language by Pashtu, the Academy had been renamed ' Pashtu Talmah '. During the last decade, much of the work was done in Persian. Now, however, greater attention is being paid to Pashtu to make it a befitting national language of the great Afghan nation." The *Islah* (the official organ, published in Persian, from Kabul) now devotes more space to writings in the Pashtu language, and it has set up a Pashtu editorial board. A literary society had also been constituted to study Pashtu literature, and the first meeting of the society was inaugurated by the Minister of Education. In his instructive little book—called *Gold and Guns on the Pathan Frontier*—the author, Mr. Abdul Qaiyum (himself a North-West Frontier man), writes:—  
 " There is a very keen desire among the Pathans (both of Afghanistan and the Frontier) to encourage and enrich their own language, Pashtu. Persian (for centuries the official language in Afghanistan) has been replaced by Pashtu. Pashtu broadcasts have become a daily feature of the Kabul and Peshwar broadcasting stations. Afghan officials are enjoined to learn Pashtu, which is fast replacing Persian as the official language of the Afghans".

Again, the North-West Frontier Province of India, which also has an overwhelmingly large (over 92 per cent.) Pashtu speaking population, has followed the example of Afghanistan. The radio broadcasts from Peshawar—the capital of the province—are now more extensively in Pashtu and Hindustani than in Persian. These facts speak for themselves, and in view of them it is almost impossible to forecast a bright prospect for the study in Afghanistan, and the North West Frontier Province, of Iqbal's voluminous Persian poems. It would be a miracle, indeed, should they continue to be read widely by the Afghans, or the Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province, who are now intensely devoted to the study of Pashtu.

in the Persia of to day, as follows :—“ Liberal opinion is turning more and more to the characteristically Iranian doctrines of Zoroastrianism, and extremists even maintain that by the ousting of this ancient faith Islam destroyed the nation's true culture ”. The poet, Pour-e-Dauod, is but one—though perhaps the most important—of the exponents of this rising tendency in modern Iran. In his famous poem, called “ Iraniano ”, he had given expression to the current forces in his country, as follows :—“ Call to mind those ancient days and victorious armies ; bring to mind also your Sovereigns, O Iranians, O Iranians, O Iranians. Where is Jamshid, Sam and Zal ? Where Tahmuraz, and where Dara ? Where Iraj of Pishddiyan ? Where is Cambyses ? Where is Ardeshir, and where is his pomp ? Where is Kavi Khusroo, the Kayanian King ? O Iranians, O Iranians ”. One of his poems Professor Pour e-Dauod concluded with a “ prayer to Ahura Mazda for his mercy and grace ”. All this is conclusive proof of the trend of modern forces in Iran, as manifested in the literature of the country, during the present century—a comprehensive survey of which is now available in Dr. Ishaque's excellent work, called *Modern Persian Poetry*, which I have referred to in a previous chapter.

Iqbal himself was by no means unaware of the trend of political forces in modern Iran and (in his *Javed Nameh*) had expressed himself as follows :—“ After ages Iran awoke to self realization, but soon fell into a trap. The creator of a civilization, it fondly imitates Europe. The Iranians have developed an intense fondness for patriotism and pedigree. They have lost themselves in the love for Iran. Rostam they proudly adore, and Hyder they sadly ignore. The Iranians have melted under the fire of the West, and have disclaimed their debt to Arabia ”. I am not discussing whether the Iranians had acted rightly or wrongly in

Arabic and Persian words, which could be used only by following the rules of Arabic and Persian grammar, respectively. Then followed a purifying process, and they dived deep into their mother tongue in order to make it a language worthy of being spoken, written, and taught in schools and universities. With the adoption of the Roman script, the language could both be spoken and written with far greater facility. With the new script, a child could be taught in six months. This gave a fillip to compulsory education, and the percentage of literates had risen from seven to forty." Are the Turks likely to forego all these highly beneficial advantages, and apply themselves to re-learn the Arabic script to be able to read Iqbal's poems in the Persian language, or would they be willing to transliterate them in the now widely accepted Roman script? There is no evidence of any such desire, or attempt, on their part; and the question does not merit consideration. It may, therefore, be taken for granted that Iqbal's Persian poems will remain a sealed book to the Turks.

#### IV

And what of Persia—the modern Iran? All recent writers on that country are agreed that the oo eraving in the mind of the Iranians, of to-day, is to shake off, as fast as they can, the trammels of Arabic influence on their literature, and also, if possible, of the Arabic script, and to hark back to the language and literature of pre-Muslim Iran. "A movement has been afoot in present-day Persia to efface, as far as possible, all traces of Arab domination and influence from the various spheres of national life." It also seeks, as a part of its programme, to purge the Persian language of Arabic words—so we read in an article on "The Importance of the Arabic Language" by Mr Shaikh Inayatullah, in *Islamic Culture* for July, 1938. In the latest work on the subject—*Modern Iran* by Mr. Elwell-Sutton—the author writes of the cultural development in

in the Persia of to day, as follows :—“ Liberal opinion is turning more and more to the characteristically Iranian doctrines of Zoroastrianism, and extremists even maintain that by the ousting of this ancient faith Islam destroyed the nation's true culture ”. The poet, Pour-e-Daoud, is but one—though perhaps the most important—of the exponents of this rising tendency in modern Iran. In his famous poem, called “ Iraniano ”, he had given expression to the current forces in his country, as follows :—“ Call to mind those ancient days and victorious armies ; bring to mind also your Sovereigns, O Iranians, O Iranians, O Iranians. Where is Jamshid, Sam and Zal ? Where Tahmuraz, and where Dara ? Where Iraj of Pishddiyan ? Where is Cambyzes ? Where is Ardeshir, and where is his pomp ? Where is Kii Khusroo, the Kayanian King ? O Iranians, O Iranian ; ”. One of his poems Professor Pour e-Daoud concluded with a “ prayer to Ahura Mazda for his mercy and grace ”. All this is conclusive proof of the trend of modern forces in Iran, as manifested in the literature of the country, during the present century—a comprehensive survey of which is now available in Dr. Ishaque's excellent work, called *Modern Persian Poetry*, which I have referred to in a previous chapter.

Iqbal himself was by no means unaware of the trend of political forces in modern Iran and (in his *Javed Nameh*) had expressed himself as follows :—“ After ages Iran awoke to self realization, but soon fell into a trap. The creator of a civilization, it fondly imitates Europe. The Iranians have developed an intense fondness for patriotism and pedigree. They have lost themselves in the love for Iran Rustam they proudly adore, and Hyder they sadly ignore. The Iranians have melted under the fire of the West, and have disclaimed their debt to Arabia”. I am not discussing whether the Iranians had acted rightly or wrongly in

what they have done, and are doing. My point is that on Iqbal's own admission, they had turned to nationalism and set their face against pan-Islamism on the lines urged by Iqbal in his works. In the latest work on the subject—Mr. Elwell-Sutton's *Modern Iran*—we read: "There is something indigestible in the Iranian nature which enables it to survive anything, and even, in the end, to swallow its conqueror". This is what had been said also of Greece and India. The very change of the name of the country from Persia to Iran, was but one only of the many indications of this ever-growing tendency to look back to the pre-Islamic period.

Iqbal's criticism of the modern Iranians (quoted above from *Javed Nameh*) clearly shows that he had not studied carefully the history of Islam in countries other than India, or he would have known that the Persians had, from the very earliest period of the Arab conquest of their country, raised the standard of revolt against cultural and political domination by the Arabians. In fact, ever since then Persia had evolved its development on its own distinctive lines, and in accordance with its native genius. Who does not know that it was not Professor Dauod, but Firdausi—the immortal author of the *Shah-Namēh*—who started the movement to eliminate Arabic words and expressions from the Persian language, and very largely succeeded in his effort, in spite of the cultural and political domination of the Arabs at that time. Again, while a small number of Zoroastrians sought religious and political freedom from Arab domination by escaping to India, the vast majority of the people that necessarily remained in Persia, managed successfully, in spite of desperate odds, in transforming Islam into a purely national religion, by infusing into it the old Persian spirit and characteristics of mysticism, which developed later into sufism. Thus Kerbela and not Mecca became for the Persian the most



important place of pilgrimage, and the genius of the country as manifested in its literature—especially poetry—is markedly different from that to be found in Arabic literature. It is because the development of Islam in India had been almost entirely on different lines from those in Persia, or Turkey, that the Indian Muslim, even of the advanced type like Iqbal, is unable to appreciate the conditions obtaining in Islamic countries outside India, in their true perspective. Are the Iranians, in view of their old and new ideologies, likely to betake themselves to Iqbal's poetry, composed in highly Arabicised Persian, with its emphatic condemnation of sufism—the one form of religio-intellectualism which still appeals to the cultured Iranian, who even to day glibly quotes from, and swears by, their greatest lyricist, Hafiz ; Iqbal's offensive and vehement attack on whom had evoked such strong protests that passages had to be suppressed by the poet in the second edition ? In the face of these outstanding facts, it would be nothing short of a miracle if the modern Iranian betook himself to Iqbal's poetry, with a view either to profit by its teachings, or to derive pleasure from its study.

## V

Coming to India, it is clear that as very few of the educated Hindus (except perhaps a handful in Hyderabad, Deccan) now know Persian, Iqbal's poems in that language will be a sealed book to the vast bulk of them. What, however, of the Indian Muslims ? The answer is that even in Provinces and States where they constitute a majority, they speak as their mother-tongue the local language and not Urdu or Hindustani, though they may learn a little of it. Thus they speak Bengalee in Bengal, Punjabi in the Punjab, Sindhi in Sindh, Pashtu in the North-West Frontier Province, and Kashmiri in Kashmir. Is it likely that they will now apply themselves on a large scale, to the study of Persian to be able to profit by the

perusal of Iqbal's poems in the language of Urdu ? There is no evidence that they have done so till now, and it may safely be presumed that they will not do so hereafter. Thus to the vast majority of the nearly four hundred millions of Indians, Iqbal's Persian poems are, and must remain, a sealed book. There remains to us, as the literary legacy of Iqbal, the slender volume of his poetry in Urdu, which is admittedly of less importance, compared with his Persian verses. This may continue to appeal to the Urdu-knowing section of Indian Muslims, and the very small culturally-Islamised sections of Hindus like the Kashmiris and the Kayasthas, who may continue to derive pleasure from reading, or reciting, the nearly one dozen poems of Iqbal on patriotic and nationalist topics. An unsuccessful attempt to interest readers in Iqbal's poems was made, in 1922, in an anthology compiled by the late Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan, called *A Voice from the East* : but it failed to achieve its object as the poems it contained were overloaded with a number of uncritical and eulogistic comments. Dr. Abdul Latif—in his *Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*—calls them "undiscriminating", and quotes as an example Sir Zulfikar's remark that "if the Peacock Throne is the pride of Persia, and the lustrous Kohinoor (diamond) the glory of the British Crown, Iqbal would surely adorn the Court of the Muses in any country". "This style of literary criticism, wholly laudatory and delightfully vague", comments Dr. Latif, "is a recrudescence of the old spirit, when writers (whether from self-interest, personal attachment, or sheer lack of discernment) did not respond to the true requirements of their art". A larger but judiciously-selected collection of Iqbal's Urdu poems—relating mainly to India, and natural scenes—with only elucidative notes, and a short biographical sketch of the poet, will better serve the object in view, than any number of encomiastic appreciations and eulogistic commentaries.

Thus the data brought together, in this chapter, from unimpeachable sources, can lead any open-minded critic to but one conclusion, that Iqbal's legacy can at best be of interest to a very small number of people, and in India only. The vast majority of Muslims in Asia and Africa speak and read their national languages - as, for instance, Chinese in China, and, in others, Arabic and its modern dialects. In Egypt and the other north-African countries, as also in Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and some other west-Asiatic countries, it is Arabic, or its modern variation, that holds the field ; and Persian is practically unknown, in them, even in cultured circles. In Turkey, Afghanistan, and the North West Frontier Province of India, it has been shown that Persian is now seriously at a discount ; while in Persia itself the trend of modern forces had diminished the influence and effect of writings like those of Iqbal, specially as Persian written by Indians had never been held in esteem by the Iranians, at any time. In India—where Persian was abolished as the court and official language so far back as 1838, more than a century ago—its knowledge is now confined to very limited circles, even amongst Muslims. This being the position, the number of Iqbal's literary legatees can easily be estimated by the impartial reader. So far as the Pathans of the North-West Frontier are concerned, it was declared, (in the course of a debate in the Provincial Assembly, at Peshawar, in March 1946), by the Premier—the Hon'ble Dr. Khan Saheb, himself a Pathan—that "in this Province the Pathan cannot understand Urdu." This statement is conclusive on the point that the Indian Pathans are incapable of even understanding Iqbal's poems in Urdu—to say nothing of appreciating them.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Ghalib, Hali and Iqbal Compared.

"It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall gladden the two or three  
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight  
Once in a century.

But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
And friendless sons of men ;

To write some earnest verse or line,  
Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine  
In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
May be forgotten in his day,  
But surely shall be crowned at last with those  
Who live and speak for aye."

—James Russell Lowell,

## II

In the course of discussion on Iqbal's poems in Persian, a reference was made to the Persian verses written by the well-known poet Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1795 — 1869). It was shown on the authority of a competent critic that though Ghalib himself attached much greater importance to his Persian poems than to those in Urdu, it is the latter, and not the former, which keep his name alive, and that even the names of his poems in Persian are now scarcely known to any fairly large section of the reading public. But as the admirers of Ghalib have always held him (in the words of Dr. Sayyid Abdul Latif, author of *Ghalib : A Critical Appreciation of His Life and Urdu Poetry*) to be "one of the world's greatest poets", and as "Urdu literary criticism is now-a-days hawked by critics who would make the world

believe that besides the sacred *Vedas*, India possesses but one inspired book, the *diwan* (collected poems) of Ghalib", Dr. Latif's book is a criticism of this estimate of and attitude towards, Ghalib's Urdu poetry. The learned author refers, in particular, to three writers who, in his opinion, had been responsible for the dissemination of such (according to him) uncritical views—Altaf Hussain Hali, the well-known essayist and poet; Dr. Abdur Rahman Bijrawari, the author of an Urdu prose work, called *Mahasin-i-Kalam Ghalib*; and Dr. Syed Mahmud, some time Education Minister, Bihar, and the writer of an Introduction to an edition of Ghalib's poems. Hali justly occupies a high place in modern Urdu literature both as an essayist and poet, but his appreciation of Ghalib (called *Yadgar-i-Ghalib*) does not satisfy Dr. Latif, who declares, after making a detailed analysis of the contents of the book, that Hali has not made it possible for his reader to get at the heart and soul of Ghalib. Turning to Dr. Bijrawari—who is responsible for the statement that "there are only two inspired books in India; the sacred *Vedas* and the *diwan* of Ghalib"—Dr. Latif holds that "his *Mahasin* too clearly brings it home to the reader that he has allowed his enthusiasm for Ghalib to swamp his judgment". As regards the theory sought to be established by Dr. Syed Mahmud in his Introduction to an edition of the Urdu poems of Ghalib) that the poet was "the apostle of Indian nationalism", that is scoffed at by Dr. Latif, who himself is a qualified critic, being the author of an excellent work called *The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*, and a scholar of both these literatures. In the end, Dr. Latif condemns the declarations of the three writers, mentioned above, that "Ghalib was a philosopher, astronomer, preacher, lover", or "the apostle of Indian nationalism". In Dr. Latif's view "Ghalib was primarily a lyrical poet", and should be judged as such, and in no other capacity.

Having come to the conclusion set forth above, Dr. Latif then embarks upon a detailed analysis and a critical survey of Ghalib's Urdu poems, and at the end of a long discussion of the subject he returns his verdict as follows:—

"Ghalib had great gifts vouchsafed to him; but he threw them away in his search for Maimon. He neither enjoyed the peace of mind he so much longed for, nor attained distinction commensurate with his high abilities". But even this very severe judgment is not all, for Dr. Latif goes on to say that "in his Urdu verse there seems to be more of art, rather artifice, than poetry; more of thought, or imagination, or fancy, than feeling. Ghalib did not deviate very much from the much-trodden path (of Urdu poets); the same hoary themes came in for treatment in his poetry. Only he gave them a new intellectual colouring. If he broke any new ground at all, he did it in the domain of pessimism". That is obviously a poor compliment to a poet, whose *divan* in the opinion of Dr. Bijanwari, is as much an inspired book as the sacred *Vedas*. But not content with what is quoted above, Dr. Latif continues as follows:—"Ghalib's innocent admirers have gone to him not for his poetry but for what they have fancied his philosophy, and for his mastery over words. His love is evidently all sensuous, there is no spirituality in it. Of love such as sustains life in moments of depression, of love which lets one forget life's travails, there is hardly any trace in the entire *divan* of Ghalib", who "never achieved greatness" as "harmony of spirit does not exist" in his poems, and "in his poetic utterance there is neither love which lets live, nor harmony born of realities, nor harmony of the sense of refuge". Dr. Latif's decree, or formal order, in pursuance of, and consequential to, his findings, quoted above, is that Ghalib—regarded by the numerous admirers of his Urdu *divan* as "one of the world's greatest poets"—"cannot be numbered among the great" ones of the earth, to say nothing of the greatest ones.

It may well be asked how Dr. Latif's opinions of Ghalib's Urdu poems are germane to the discussion of the works of Iqbal. The relevance lies in the point I desire to make that in the world of Urdu literature the traditional standards have, for some time past, been giving place to newer and more exacting ones, as evidenced by Dr. Latif's revolt against Ghalib, and his attempt at setting up critical criteria for judging of the merits and worth of so universally admired an Urdu poet. Until the publication of Dr. Latif's book in 1928, all who had written about Ghalib, as poet, had expressed ungrudging admiration for his poems, and acclaimed him as one of the greatest poets of all time, alike for his sympathetic outlook, exalting sublimity of thought, deep intensity of feeling, broad-minded rationalism, and direct appeal to the human heart, quite apart from his elegance of diction. And yet all this has been declared by Dr. Latif to be the work of a "fraternity of fanatics", who had "multiplied and vitiated the sense of perspective in literary judgment", to quote his *ipse dixit*. I am not so much concerned with the correctness or soundness of Dr. Latif's views, as with the fact that in his book he had seriously challenged the traditional supremacy of Ghalib, and applied himself to a complete reversal of the time-honoured popular judgment about that poet. Now, not even the greatest admirer of Iqbal has declared him to be a greater poet than Ghalib—either in Persian, or in Urdu. Unless Shakespeare's dictum that "that in the captain's hut a choleric word, which in the soldier is flat blasphemy" be accepted as correct, I do not see why an effort to present a critical estimate of Iqbal's works also—such as this book claims to be—should not be judged on the merits as a contribution towards setting up of a correct literary standard in Urdu literature. Dr. Latif, in referring to Ghalib's indiscriminating admirers had described them as a "fraternity of fanatics, who had vitiated the sense

of perspective in literary judgment ". It has not been found necessary to use, in this book, any such language about Iqbal's uncritical admirers, but there is no reason why the traditional estimate of Iqbal should not be subjected to analysis and criticism as has been done in the case of Ghalib himself.

### III

I shall now institute a comparison, as poets, between Hali and Iqbal, between whom there is apparently much common ground, and many seeming points of resemblance—though they may be found to be unreal on a closer analysis. The common object of both these poets was to rouse the dormant energies of the Muslims of India, and to galvanise and harness them in the cause of progress and reform, and ultimately to the restoration of their former status. Professor Tahir Jamil's well-written work—called *Hali's Poetry: A Study*—is of great assistance to any one interested in the study of the subject. "Hali stands as the leader of a new movement in Urdu poetry, diverting it to fresh channels"—opines the author, and his view is confirmed by Dr. Abdul Latif who declares—in his *Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*—that Hali is "the leader and inspirer of the movement" for a "striking development" in modern Urdu literature. "Hali stands out pre-eminent for his valuable services to Urdu poetry. If the Saiyad (Sir Syed Ahmad) succeeded in overcoming religious fanaticism, Hali applied himself enthusiastically, to purge Urdu poetry of the exaggeration, artificiality, and untruthfulness, which were sucking the very life-blood of literature"—writes Professor Tahir Jamil. Hali was a voluminous author, both in prose and verse, but it is not necessary for me to discuss them. It would be adequate to my purpose to deal with his most famous poem—*Madd' wa-Jazr-i-Islam* ("The Flow and Ebb of Islam"), called *Musaddas Hali* in common parlance,—in which the author



practically adopted the same line, as was done later by Iqbal, namely, recalling in vivid terms the glories of the early Arab polity, and the brilliant conquests of the Saracens (in Asia, Europe, and Africa) with a view to rouse the Indian Muslims from their intellectual stupor, social stagnation, and economic decadence. Hali, encouraged by Sir Saiyid Ahmadi, of Aligarh College fame, applied himself to that task, and in 1879 issued his masterpiece, the *Masaddas-i-Hali*, on which I shall now offer some comments.

All competent authorities on modern Urdu poetical literature are agreed that from the moment of the appearance of the *Musaddas*, this great poem took Indo-Muslim circles by storm, and secured for itself a permanent and commanding position in modern Urdu poetry. It is undoubtedly the first poem which ushered in a new school of poetry in modern Urdu literature. But while that is so, Hali did not escape criticism on the ground that the subject-matter of his poem was limited to an appeal to the Muslims only. "Hali has also been charged with being a narrow-minded communalist, who longs for the glory of his community alone. He may, to some extent, be said to be guilty of this charge, but it cannot be ascribed to that pan-Islamic motive which has become a bogey with some, and which might be taken to be anti-Indian in aspiration". That is the defence set up by Hali's interpreter, Professor Jamil, and it is a defence which may unreservedly be accepted as a plausible though not a convincing one. "It was a communal work, no doubt, but from a broader point of view it was nothing short of a national service, for what a poor thing Indian national destiny would be if the seventy millions of Indian Muslims had neither part nor lot in it?"—writes Professor Jamil, and asks the Indian nationalist for an answer.

Writers on Hali's *Musaddas* (not only Muslims, but even Hindus) apply to it the term "nationalist in spirit".

Howsoever much against English usage it may be to do so, in the case of a work limited in its scope and appeal to but one particular community, and not to the country, as a whole, such usage leads to no misunderstanding in India, where the principal communities are so large, comprising millions and millions, and where the backward or stagnant condition of one of them would be a great hindrance to the progress of the whole nation. In this view of the matter one may accept the popular opinion that Hali in his *Musaddas* represented the nationalist spirit, as against the frankly communal spirit which abounds in much of Iqbal's poetry, to which reference is very probably implied in Professor Tahir Jamil's passage, quoted above, about "pan-Islamic bogey, anti-Indian in aspiration". Hali thus occupies a uniquely distinguished position in the rank of Urdu poets, as he was the first to demonstrate the value of a new style of poetry in his *Musaddas*, the first to attempt to galvanise by his poem the Indian Muslims by exhorting them to improve their deplorable condition. He was the first to write a patriotic poem called *Watan*, "the mother-land"), was the first to deal a most formidable blow at the traditional style of Urdu poetry, the outstanding features of which had till then been "artificiality, conventionality and insincerity". He was the first in Urdu poetry—as Muhammad Husain Azad was in Urdu prose—to introduce political and economic themes in his verses, and the first to be justly entitled to the credit of inaugurating a new and vivifying literary movement. "And he put his appeal, into language which both the intellectual and the unintellectual could understand, calling to his aid illustrations from popular institutions familiar to all". Apart from that, "Urdu poetry was greatly enriched, and improved, by this consummate inventor of new forms and new themes. But for him it could never have disentangled itself from singing about love, and wine, and would have never risen to the high level which it has now achieved.

He was the first great poet of India, the herald, leader, and master of the modern school of poetry in Urdu literature, and the precursor of Iqbal". So according to Professor Tahir Jamil—from whose book I have quoted above—Hali was "the precursor of Iqbal". It is time, therefore, that we turned our attention now to Hali's successor, with whom I am primarily concerned in this book; though to be able to present a full discussion, I have at times discussed, and instituted comparisons with, other poets also—both Indian and foreign.

#### IV

All his admirers and interpreters agree that in composing his poetical works, in Persian and Urdu, Iqbal was actuated by the idea of raising the fallen status of the Muslims, in general, and those of India, in particular. If so, his object was evidently the same as that of Hali, in his *Musaddas*. We have seen how Hali treated his theme, by instituting a comparison between the golden epochs of the Saracenic kingdoms in Arabia, Egypt, and Spain, and contrasting them with the fallen condition of the present-day Muslims in India—much to the disadvantage of the latter. That was also the primary object Iqbal aimed at, though not perhaps in the way adopted by Hali in his *Musaddas*. As such it is natural for critics to institute a comparison between the method and technique of the two poets. To begin with, Hali had the good sense to appeal to the Urdu-knowing section of the people of India—the Muslims in particular—and so he composed all his poems in Urdu. In this respect he had evidently an advantage over Iqbal, the vast bulk of whose poems are in Persian, which few (even amongst Indian Muslims) now know. Again Hali's *Musaddas* is composed in a style which by its simplicity has always appealed not only to Urdu-knowing Muslims but to Hindus as well; unlike the writings of Iqbal, which vitiated by defects,

already discussed at some length elsewhere) seriously prevent their making any appeal to the Hindus. Having expressed my opinions on this subject in an earlier chapter, I shall now make a fairly long extract from *The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*, by Dr. Abdul Latif, which will show how far the criticism offered by me is supported by that qualified Indo-Muslim scholar.

Dr. Latif writes :—" If we accept the writings of Dr. Iqbal as the best specimen of the literary productions of this latest school of sentimental poetry, we shall not fail to notice a distinct retrogression, a return to the style of the poets whom Hali had deliberately relegated to the limbo of oblivion. This aspect will at once force itself on our attention when we place the *Flow and Ebb of Islam* (that is the *Musaddas* of Hali and the *Complaint*, and *Reply to the Complaint* of Iqbal side by side—both treating of the same subject and both written in the same stanza. In the one (that is in Hali) there is simplicity, clearness, grace and beauty of language and diction, and a marvellous control over the form and subject. Above all there is an utter disregard of convention. In the other (that is in Iqbal) there is no doubt a certain charm of expression suggestive of deep feeling, but none of the outstanding qualities characterising the *Flow and Ebb of Islam*. Iqbal's *Complaint* begins in the conventional style, and in the conventional language. The conventional touch is present throughout. Words and phrases, and figures of speech, which for centuries have formed the stock-in-trade of the composer of the love, and mystic songs, are freely employed. There is too much artifice in expression, and very little simplicity. It might be urged that the theme of the poem, being so grand, called for a grand style. But a grand style is not synonymous with pomposity. Nor is it opposed to clearness. Any poem, or any piece of literature, which fails to produce unified effect, is defective to that extent

The *Complaint* (of Iqbal's) is a collection of sentiments such as will excite the vanity or pride of the Indian Muslims, each of which may be pleasing in itself, but which together hardly convey any definite or clear idea. We cannot refrain from observing that his (Iqbal's) art does not by any means reach the standard and excellence of that of Hali." Any comment on the above outspoken but just criticism would be an act of supererogation.

To turn now to the subject-matter of the two poets, we may take as an example Hali's appeal to the Prophet (on whom be peace) to pray to God for the redemption of the Muslims, and Iqbal's *Shikwa* ("Complaint to God"). In Hali's appeal there is absolutely no reference to any one other than Muslims, and there is nothing in it, in fact, to evoke any dissent from a non-Muslim, as he is not at all brought into it. But in striking contrast to it is Iqbal's prayer to the Almighty in which he approaches Him not only to obtain information as to why the Muslims were (according to the poet) in the throes of misery, misfortune, and decadence, at that time, but also to plead their case before God, as follows : —

There are nations besides us : there are sinners amongst them too,

Humble folk and those intoxicated with pride,

Slothful, careless, or clever.

Hundreds there are who are tired of thy Name.

But Thy Grace descends on their dwellings

And the lightning strikes but ours.

Let us wait and hear the poet developing his point : —

"Gone are the Muslims," so the idols in the temples say :  
And rejoice that the protectors of the Ka'ba are no more,

"The world's stage is cleared of the camel drivers,

With their Qur'an in their armpits have they fled."

The polytheists are laughing at us; Hast Thou no feeling?  
Hast Thou no regard for Thy Unity?

It is difficult to believe that any one having a true conception of the noble ideals of Islam could ever express

appreciation of, or admiration for, such a stridently jarring note against poor "polytheists" and their "idols in the temples", in a professedly literary work—quite apart from the gracelessness of the position taken by a poet in invoking God's wrath on His creatures, because, forsooth, he fancied that the "polytheists" were (in the absence of some better occupation) "laughing", and their "idols in the temple" were saying unpleasant things about Muslims, which made the poet invoke God's wrath on them. By the way, it is something for the polytheists to know that their idols could express their ideas if not to their worshippers, at least to a poet. Compare with Iqbal's notions about "polytheists", those of Rudyard Kipling, who (because of his having been born in Bombay, and lived in India for years) understood far better than Iqbal ever did the genius of India in the spheres of religion, as evidenced by his noble stanza, quoted below, which is permeated with the highest spiritual thought:—

"My brother bows", so saith Kabir, "to stocks and stones  
in heathen-wise,

But in my brother's voice I hear my own unuttered agony;  
His gods are as his fates assign,  
His prayer is all the world's and mine".

## V

A namesake of Hali—Mr. Altaf Husain—had translated into English verse Iqbal's *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, under the title of *The Complaint and The Answer*. In the course of an Introduction to the book, contributed by Mr. Gbulain Ahmad Parvez, the writer deals with Iqbal's object in composing these two Urdu poems, a subject which is germane to the discussion in this chapter. I shall first quote the relevant passage from the Introduction, and then offer some comments on the contentions raised by the writer. Writes Mr. Parvez;—"When this poem was first published, it produced two different reactions. While thousands of Muslims felt that the poet had expressed their innermost thought, in stirring verse, and thousands of

tongues took up its refrains, the mere orthodox were scandalised that God should be accused of injustice. Both were wrong. Iqbal did not share the 'complaint', nor did he accuse God. He merely put into language the feelings of his generation, feelings which he knew were based on that perversity of human nature which blinds self-analysis, and rationalises its own misfortunes by blaming the injustice of others. For the particular object the poet had in view, his method was most effective. The *Shikwa* summed up the accumulated bitterness in the minds of Muslims who sub-consciously shrank from uncomfortable introspection and blamed "Fate" for the ills which they had become heirs to. When he had thus effectively focussed attention on the degradation of the Muslim, for which they were holding the caprice of Providence responsible, the poet produced his *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, pricking their bubble of complacent self-delusion. In the *Jawab* Iqbal strikes his unerring finger on the ailing place. He tells Muslims that God is not unjust to them, but that they are unjust to themselves. He shows that their fatalism is mere self-deception, a screen wherewith to hide their own shortcoming. He reminds them that if they will only be true to their great heritage, the Quran, their effort is their Fate. There are many, even among the warmest admirers of Iqbal, who go into ecstasies over the *Shikwa*, but appear to attach less importance to the *Jawab*. They are unjust to the poet, even in their praise, because they miss both his purpose and his message. To single out the *Shikwa* for praise is in effect to accept the theory of the poet's self-identification with Muslim escapism and blame of Fate. It is to stress the negative aspect of his whole poem, and to throw emphasis on the question which troubled his thought, not on the answer by which he brought light into the darkness of others. It may be profitable to recall to Iqbal's imperfect sympathisers, the mournful quatrain, composed shortly before his death :

" Even as I depart from this world,  
 Every one will say ' I knew him',  
 But the truth is, alas ! that none knew  
 Who the stranger was, or what he said, or whence he  
 came ! ".

I make no apology for quoting the above rather long passage, as the subject it deals with is of importance to a correct appreciation of the poems under discussion. Now the theory propounded by the writer about the intention of the poet may be ingenious, but it is by no means convincing. To begin with, the implication of the theory—that the poet in composing the earlier poem (*The Complaint*) did not express his own view, but (appearing like an advocate before a court) that of his clients, the Indian Muslims, does not seem to be at all warranted by a careful study of the text of the poem, since there is not a word in it to indicate any such intention on the part of the poet ; nor does Mr. Parvez quote a single line from the *The Complaint* or *The Answer* in support of his contention. Surely, Iqbal, who makes, in his poems, frequent references to himself, and his work, and activities—the quatrain quoted above by Mr. Parvez himself lends support to my view—would not have hesitated to say so in the poem itself, were he pleading the cause of others in the capacity of their advocate, and expressing their views rather than his. For these reasons one cannot easily accept as sound the contention that Iqbal appeared in the role of an advocate, on behalf of the Indian Muslims, in composing *The Complaint*. And what about the poet's role in composing *The Answer* ? Did he convey in the latter poem his own views, or did he choose to play the part of an advocate again, on behalf of the Almighty ? Once you accept the theory of advocacy, on the part of the poet, you find yourself placed on the horns of a dilemma. Apart from that, the theory of advocacy is based on the assumption of—in the writer's own words—  
 " feelings based on that perversity of human nature which



till the time of his passing away. "none knew who the stranger was, or what he said", what right has he to declare his own convictions about these two poems as those of the poet himself? The safest conclusion thus seems to be that in both the *Complaint* and the *Answer* Iqbal did not pose as an advocate, either on behalf of the Muslims, or the Almighty, and express his views, "under instructions" for either the one or the other, but that he gave vent to his own emotions and feelings, as all poets do, and are expected to do. This view presents fewer difficulties than does the ingenious theory propounded by the writer, which I have discussed above. Thus here, again, there is a marked difference between the treatment of the subject—the decadence of the Indian Muslims and the call for their uplift—between Iqbal and Hali, the former arraigning the Almighty in one poem, and defending him in another; the latter leaving such anthropomorphism alone, and confining himself to the purely secular aspects of the problem.

## VI

But apart from religion, I have found nothing in Iqbal to equal the following exhortation to Muslims by Hali, on the merits of acquiring knowledge, and its great beneficial advantages—

"O Knowledge! by thee have whole nations been enriched;  
From wherever thou hast vanished, there has come decay;  
The treasures of the hidden world have been unlocked  
For those.

Races who have established thee as their stock-in-trade.  
Thou Knowledge: art the key to the storehouse of Joy;  
Thou art a willing fountain of delights and profits;  
Rest in respect of both worlds is under thy shade;  
Thou art a means of subsistence here, and a guide to the  
hereafter.

So rich as the region of the West is through thee,  
Like bounty, to the East, from thee, O Knowledge! there  
is none

Ah knowledge! can it be that, like the moon of  
*Nakhsh-ab,*

Thy rays of light are limited to that one spot.

The above excellent rendering from the *Quatrains of Hali* by Mr. G. E. Ward, brings into prominence the high aims and ideals of *Hali*, in the sphere of the acquisition of knowledge. It is thus clear that not only in diction, style, and choice of language, but also in the expression of noble ideals and truly poetic sentiments—in fact, in many, if not all respects, which distinguish a great poet—*Hali* is superior to *Iqbal*, though the latter is now far more popular than *Hali*, among Indian Muslims. And it is, to my mind, a great pity that the present-day Indian Mussalmans have very nearly forgotten the lessons inculcated in *Hali's Musaddas*, which are presented in it in a far more inspiring manner than in any similar poem composed by *Iqbal*. That, at any rate, is the conclusion I have arrived at, after a careful study of the works of both the poets, and the reasons for the view I have expressed are set forth above. If others do not share any view but hold that *Iqbal* is superior to *Hali* in all that makes a poet great, they are as much entitled to hold that opinion, as I am to that expressed above. The reader will, no doubt, choose the view the grounds for holding which will commend themselves to him.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### Iqbal And Some Great Poets

"Iqbal's poetry and philosophy are both great. Perhaps his poetry is so because of his philosophy, and his philosophy because of his poetry. In Iqbal philosophy and poetry are indissolubly blended as they have never been before in any great thinker—not even in Dante".

—Professor M.M. Sharif (in a communication to the author).

"Analysis is not the business of the poet. His business is to portray, not to dissect. By poetry we mean not all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verso. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination—the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets has described it—in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled :

'As imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name'.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. The heart of man is the province of poetry, and of poetry alone".

—Macaulay (in his *Essays on Milton and Byron*).

## II

Iqbal has had a number of admiring defenders—discerning and undiscerning—who all take, more or less, the same line, and in almost identical terms defend the poet's frankly dogmatic spirit. I shall quote from the latest essayist on the subject, Mr. Ghulam Sarwar, who in "Some

Aspects of Iqbal's Poetry " (to which reference has been already made in discussing the value of Iqbal's philosophy and political views) writes thus:—" People who differ from Iqbal in religion and in their political views allege that his poetry is parochial, and as such is limited in its appeal and significance. They look upon him as a rank pan-Islamist, and a thorough communalist. But in its real spirit it rises above all communal limitations. *He no doubt, writes as a Muslim, and writes for the Muslim* (my italics), but in its broader implications his poetry is a source of inspiration to all those who are making a heroic effort to shatter the chains of political servitude. Dante wrote as a Florentine Christian of the Middle Ages, and Milton as a Puritan, but is not their poetry an equally good source of inspiration to non-Christians? The Indian nationalistic movement has derived inspiration from the Western writers. Great poetry rises above limitations prescribed by communal party feelings; it would not be great otherwise. Truth is truth whether uttered by a Muslim, a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist, or a Jew, and it extends its benefits to all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Iqbal has charged his poetry with certain vital truths of life, and has emphasised the need of action in the life of every progressive and freedom loving individual or community, and has not reserved the right of benefit from his inspiring words for his co-religionists alone". One would be justified in thinking that Mr. Sarwar gives away his case when he says that Iqbal " no doubt, writes as a Muslim, and writes for the Muslim".

This is the defence of Iqbal at its best, and it would be unnecessary, therefore, to quote from any other work in English. But it would not do to ignore the Urdu work, put together by a committee of Muslim scholars, containing a number of essays, called *Iqbal*, and issued as a memorial volume. One of the essays is in defence of

Iqbal, and I make some extracts from it, in an English version of it. Says the writer : — " There are some who speak of Iqbal as parochial. They think that Iqbal is a poet meant for Muslims alone. Others have no concern with him, nor has he anything to do with them. If this idea is pushed further it means that Tagore's philosophy of life is meant for the Hindus only, Goethe's message is meaningless for all except Germans, and Milton's teaching is nothing but a replica of Christian teaching. Evidently this view is ludicrous. Iqbal wants the perfection of the whole human race, and for this purpose suggests the path he considers suitable. He is against æsthetic poetry. His endeavours are directed towards grand ideals and lofty purposes. Formerly he considered as the highest ideal that each particle of India's dust was god. But when his outlook widened he found that this conception was too narrow. When he wrote that ' China and Arabia are ours as well as Hindustan, we are Muslims and the whole world is our homeland ', many of his Hindu friends said that he had ceased to be their poet, and became the poet of one community. To say this is not true, as there is a sort of life for all in Iqbal's poetry. Iqbal does not like that narrow-mindedness and limited mentality which means only a change from white capitalists to brown usurpers. In fact, he wants from the core of his heart, the reformation and prosperity of the motherland, and he is always ready to share her sorrows". The names of the poets mentioned in the two long passages extracted above, and also the reference made by some writers to Kalidasa, with whom they institute comparison, sum up all that has been said and written by the admirers of Iqbal ; and the Urdu essayist, I have quoted from but repeats, in substance, the statements of Mr Sarwar.

Now I hold it absolutely uncritical to speak of Iqbal in the same breath with Milton, and other poets of the same

calibre and standard, for Iqbal is frankly a propagandist, though in the best sense of the term, preaching doctrine and dogmas—particularly in the poems composed, in his later years, containing his mature views, and constituting, as it were, his poetic testament. What one thus misses in Iqbal is the universal view of life : what one regrets is the completeness with which dogma had ousted poetry. There is such a thing as universality in literature which transcends all race and religion, and which makes an appeal in all ages, and to all communities and peoples. Such universality is characteristic of what is called “world literature”, as it appeals to humanity, in general. Poetry is immortal precisely to the extent to which it rises above dogma and environment, and touches the heart of every one by reason of the appeal to the human element enshrined in it—as eloquently set forth by Macaulay in the brilliant passages quoted by me as motto in this chapter. All other poetry can be admired and used by a few; it may even arouse enthusiasm in a few breasts; it may also serve a temporary need. Such may be the verdict on Iqbal’s poetry. But it does not constitute “world literature”. The pity is that Iqbal, who might have written the poetry of universality, and contributed to “world literature”, allowed himself to write a vast mass of verse in the interest of dogma and propaganda, which can but appeal to the circle interested in them, and to no others.

### III

If Kalidasa is a great poet, it is not because he ever preaches Hinduism, but because he reads the human heart, depicts human emotions and passions, delineates human character, and describes the beauties of Nature. How else could Gnethe—one of the world’s greatest literary figures—living in Germany about fifteen to twenty centuries after Kalidasa, have hurst into the following rapturous applause and world-famous appreciation about *Shakuntala*, the greatest drama by that greatest Indian dramatist :—

Willst du die Blüthe des Frühlings,  
 die Früchte des späteren Jahres,  
 Willst du was reizt und entzucht,  
 Willst du was sättigt und nährt,  
 Willst du den Himmel, die Erde,  
 mit einem Namen begreifen  
 Nenn'ich, Sakuntala, Dich.  
 und so ist Alles gesagt.

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms  
 and the fruits of its decline,

And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured,  
 feasted, fed,

Would'st thou the Earth and Heaven itself in one sole  
 name combine ?

I name thee, O *Shakuntala* ! and all at once is said.

Goethe's apostrophe is a conclusive verdict against identifying Kalidasa with Hinduism. Another great German scholar—Alexander von Humboldt—rightly observed that "tenderness in the expression of feeling and richness of creative faculty had justly assigned to Kalidasa his lofty place among the poets of the world". In the face of these declarations can it be urged, with any show of reason, that there is the faintest trace of propaganda in any of the works of Kalidasa ? His plays have none : his epic poems have none ; his *Cloud Messenger* is pure fantasy ; his *Seasons* is pure descriptive nature poetry. And if it be suggested that his works are far removed from day-to-day life of ordinary people, and can therefore point to no moral in our practical life, one may well ask : is the highest poetry expected to be only another form of a civil or a criminal procedure code, or a catechism for examinations, or a preacher's manual ? The best poetry is ever unobtrusive ; it captivates our senses ; lends grace to our emotions, brings sweetness and gentleness into our lives, and presents to us examples of the cardinal virtues that uplift humanity. That is the ideal set forth by Macaulay in his essays on Milton

and Byron, some extracts from which had been taken as mottos to this chapter. That is what Kalidasa had successfully done, and thus achieved for himself a place in "world literature".

#### IV

The Florentine, Dante, howsoever deeply influenced he might have been by Christianity, had made his *Divine Comedy* last through the ages by reason of its intrinsically characteristic note of universality. Surely it is not its theology, not its dogma, not even its deeply religious background, but its remarkable catholicity of outlook on the eternal verities of life that has appealed to humanity, throughout the centuries. The general impression it makes on readers is one not of any dogmatical variety, but of eternal truth, to which the adherents of all faiths have subscribed since the dawn of Civilisation. As the poet's vision fades, the conclusion is irresistible that the human will finds its final repose in the encirclement of the Divine will. There is nothing specially Christian in spirit in the description of earthly paradise, as set forth in the memorable lines :—

Look how the sun is on the forehead glowing,  
Look at the grass, the tender shrubs, the bloom  
That here the soil is willingly bestowing.

Now what is there specifically Christian in the above revelation of eternal beauty, which the poet saw with amazement and delight ? And this is by no means a solitary instance ; the poem abounds in touches of universalism. What ensures Dante's permanent appeal to humanity is thus the combination in it of grandeur, pathos, the sense of suffering, and wide human sympathy, and not any special pleading for Christian dogmas, to say nothing of religious propaganda.

And Milton ? Puritan, Protestant, Cromwell's supporter— is there in his poems a reminder of all that, or does one not rather forget the circumstances in which he lived and worked and even the causes for which he strove and suffered ? Is not



his *Paradise Lost* a grand epic of the whole human species, capable of ministering to humanity's moral and spiritual needs, wholly irrespective of the Biblical background of its story? The problems of evil, of sin and suffering, and of redemption, are not particularly Christian, but are universal problems of mankind. Again, though *Lycidas* contains passages attacking those who grate their lean and flashy songs on their scannell pipes of wretched straw, what interests us in it, and will continue to interest all who never knew *Lycidas*, is that despite the sorrow that has come to the singer in the death of *Lycidas*, who is dead ere his prime, he finds comfort in the thought which is absolutely universal rather than distinctively Christian:—

For *Lycidas*, your sorrow, is not dead,  
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
 And tricks his beams, and with new-sprinkled ore  
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :  
 So *Lycidas* sunk low, but mounted high.

As regards Goethe, who also is brought into the discussion by some undiscerning admirers of Iqbal, it would be sufficient to quote some extracts (from the article on the greatest German poet) from the latest edition of that highly authoritative work, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—"The crowning achievement of Goethe's literary life was the *Faust*" who "finally triumphs over the powers of evil". In it "there lies a philosophy of life, a ripe wisdom born of experience, such as no other modern European poet has given us. *Faust* has been well called the 'divine comedy' of the eighteenth century humanism". Goethe's "was the last of those universal minds which have been able to compass all domains of human activity and knowledge. That Goethe is Germany's greatest poet has never been seriously questioned. Goethe was a poet whose supreme greatness lay in his subjectivity;

hy far the larger—and the better—part (of his poetical work) is the immediate precipitate of his thought, emotions, and experiences. No other German poet has succeeded in attuning feeling, sentiment, and thought so perfectly to the music of words as he ; none has expressed so fully that subtle spirituality in which the strength of German lyricism lies. Of all modern men of genius, Goethe is the most universal." Yes, " the most universal "—that is Goethe's distinctive merit as a poet, dramatist, and teacher ; and, as such, with no trace of any propaganda in his works.

## V

To refer now to Rabindranath Tagore, whose name is also brought into the discussion, it may be stated that the literature relating to the life and works of Tagore is now extensive, not only in Bengali and English, but also in several Continental languages. It would be sufficient, however, for the present purpose to quote the views, about the nature of Tagore's poetry, from the writings of a well-known English author, and also from those of an eminent Continental scholar. In his book, called *Rabindranath Tagore : His Life and Work*, Mr. Edward Thompson expresses his view of the essential characteristics of Tagore's poems in the following words : " In *Iarna* we have Hinduism's most characteristic doctrine ", but " neither *karma*, nor the Hindu doctrine of transmigration, can be found in Rabindranath. His work has none of the outward dress of Hinduism. Losing its Hindu *differentiae*, it is one with the Divine Eros of all ages and religions ", and that is how—adds Mr. Thompson—Rabindranath has become " the universal poet that he is ". Similarly, Professor V. Lenney—a Czecho-Slovakian scholar—in his work designated *Rabindranath Tagore ; His Personality and Work*, records his views on the same subject, in the following words :—" Tagore abandons the outer world and turns to the depths of his own heart, to

fied there a new estimate of man's relation to the world and to his God. In masterly verses, intensely musical, he communicates these thoughts to the reader, who experiences a foretaste of the communion of man and God. It is for this reason that his charming religious poems, collected under the title *Gitanjali* ("A Handful of Songs"), although full of the colouring of his native land, are so universal in their appeal". Again :—"Although his art is in the truest sense universal, he has carried the fame of his country abroad like no other of her sons. True to the national spirit of his country, he has worked like no other Indian for a closer contact between East and West. Tagore's universal humanitarianism is the corner stone of the collaboration between East and West."

To turn to some other qualified critics of Tagore : the British signatories—including many eminent names in the world of literature—to the appeal inviting the co-operation of the people of Britain in opening a Tagore House, in London, had recorded their view that "Rabindranath was one of the greatest teachers of the world, who more than any one else in modern times, in the literary world, had expressed not only the spirit and culture of India, but taught the spirit of internationalism and co-operation". Such is the consensus of opinion amongst cultured Europeans as to internationalism and universalism being the characteristic notes of Rabindranath's work as a poet. Nor should it be supposed that such are the sentiments of Western *litterateurs* alone. To judge from the observations quoted below, an Indo-Muslim scholar takes precisely the same view of the relative merits, as poet, of Iqbal and Tagore. Thus Mr. Saadat Ali Khan strikingly sums up the difference in the position of Iqbal and Tagore, as poet, in the remarks (made by him in "A Note on Iqbal", printed in the first issue, for 1913, of *Indian Art and Letters*, London) which are as follows :—

"Iqbal was at his greatest when he silently mused over life, rather than when he expounded his political and philosophical theories with vehemence which was characteristic of him in later days. He wove such an entangled pattern of diverse ideas, contradicting one another, that the task of showing a straight unbroken line of logical thought in his works is a most formidable one for his critics. The poet preached nothing new, nothing that the philosopher and moralist have not already preached a thousand times, in perhaps a more comprehensive and logical manner. How different was his great contemporary, Tagore, who lived in a beautiful world of his own, in an atmosphere of serene optimism. Shantiniketan was the abode of peace; but Iqbal had built his house upon a volcano, and every under current, every movement, however slight, left its mark, its indelible impress". This aspect of the discussion need not be pursued further, as enough had been said to assist the seeker after Truth to arrive at an independent conclusion of his own.

## VI

Yes, it is universalism of spirit, and cosmopolitanism of outlook, and above all the effort at harmonising of the seeming divergences of life in the fundamental unity of the phenomena around us—these constitute the main characteristic of inspirational literature, whether in prose or verse, which captures the human imagination, appeals to our emotions and senses, is justly regarded as "world-literature" by its possessing force and spirit, and outlives the ravages of time. Now keeping these criteria in mind, contrast Iqbal's works with those of the five great poets, usually referred to in defence of the poet by his admirers, and see whether there is anything in the works of Kalidasa, Dante, Milton, Goethe, and Tagore that subordinates poetry to dogmatic propaganda, which is characteristic of Iqbal's poems? There is absolutely no trace of it in any of their

works ; and it is, therefore, that compared with them, Iqbal fails to rank with the immortals. Except on very rare occasions he seems unable to forget that it is his mission to preach to his readers his own view of religion — which was a thoroughly laudable object to seek to achieve in prose, but it has decidedly nothing whatsoever to do with poetry. Iqbal thus fails to rank with the poets of the first magnitude, because there is little either universality or harmony in his works. As a highly qualified critic—A. E. Housman—rightly wrote : “ It is the function of poetry to harmonise the sadness of the world ” : Yes, it is harmony which is one of the essential traits of great and genuine poetry ; and what Tennyson wrote of Milton : —

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,  
O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God gifted organ voice of England,  
Milton a name to resound for ages !

is equally true of all great poets of the world. If Iqbal falls short, judged by that standard, it is because one looks in vain in his works for that “ heavenly harmony ”, from which—as Dryden sang —“ this universal frame began ”.

But leaving aside comparison with the immortals of world-literature, let us institute comparison between Iqbal and three well-known English “ philosophic poets ”—Shelley, Wordsworth and Browning. Each of them has left a number of poems that are justly regarded as truly philosophic. Of Shelley’s philosophic poems it would be sufficient to recall *Adonais*, *Hymn of Apollo*, *Prometheus Unbound* and *Queen Mab* ; of Wordsworth’s *Intimations of Immortality*, *Tintern Abbey* and some *Sonnets*, and of Browning’s *A Grammarian’s Funeral*, *Paracelsus*, and *Rabbi Ben Ezra* leaving out of account certain other poems expressing their philosophic views. Compare the sentiments, and emotional appeals to human feelings, contained in these philosophic poems with those of Iqbal (as printed

with translations in the English works written by the poet's admirers, to which reference has been made above), and the contrast becomes at once marked and glaring between their respective outlook on life and inspirational force. In the philosophic English poets philosophy is subordinate to poetry, while in Iqbal's poems philosophy seeks to oust poetry which is a serious defect from the literary critic's viewpoint.

Take, for instance, such well known passages from Shelley's *Adonais* as "he has out-soared the shadow of our night", "he is made one with Nature", "the One remains the many change and pass", or from *Hymn of Apollo* "I am the eye with which the universe beholds itself and knows itself divine", or from the concluding stanza of *Prometheus Unbound* beginning with the never-to-be-forgotten words "to suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite"—is there in any of them any trace of Christian dogmatism, and is not poetry dominant over philosophy? Take now Wordsworth. Just think of the last stanza from *After Thought on the River Duddon*, with its opening words, "still glides the stream and shall for ever glide; the Form remains, the Function never dies", or from his *Intimations of Immortality*, the famous stanza with its opening words, "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting", or the other well-known passage in *Tintern Abbey* beginning with the words, "I have learned to look on Nature",—all which, and many more, are apt illustrations of Wordsworth's own definition (in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*) that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity". And this is no less true of Browning—perhaps the most philosophic of English poets—many of whose poems teem with glorious examples of philosophic poetry of the highest kind and degree. I shall recall a few of Browning's famous philosophic poems in

the *Grammatian's Funeral* how wonderfully vividly is brought out the contrast between the ideals of "that low man", and "this high man"—the former who "seeks a little thing to do, sees it and does it", while the latter "with a great thing to pursue, dies ere he knows it". "This low man, has the world here", while "that high man aiming at a million misses a unit", and "throws himself on God, and unperplexed seeking shall find Him". *Paracelsus* abounds in philosophic conceptions and ideals of the highest order, but is absolutely free from Christian dogmatics or propaganda. "Truth is within ourselves", "God is the perfect poet who in his person acts his own creation", "progress is the law of life; man is not man yet". "I shall press God's lamp close to my breast", are but some of the memorable passages in that poem. Similarly in *Rabi Ben Ezra* the stanzas beginning respectively with the words "Grow old along with me", and "Then welcome each rebuff", and the immortal lines in *Asclando*: "one who never doubted but marched breast forward", are splendid examples of philosophic poetry at their very best. There are also many such poets in other literatures as well—the most notable in Persian literature being Hafiz. In all of them one finds (to quote Wordsworth's words) "emotion recollected in tranquillity". Is that so with Iqbal? Readers of his poetical works can easily form their own opinion on the subject, in the light of the materials brought together in this thesis.

## VII

To hark back then to the question of questions, with which this book is primarily concerned, can any qualified critic hold, on a careful consideration of the subject, and on the materials available to him, that Iqbal can be regarded as a poet, who produced "great literature", in the sense of creative or inspiring literature? Let us see

first of all what is meant by the term "great literature". Dr. Amaraoatba Jha, discussing the "Ideals of Literature", writes as follows :—"Great literature must remain literature, and not become subservient to religion, politics, economics, or science. Its borders are wide, and they touch and embrace every topic. It sings of peace, and also glorifies war; it celebrates monarchs, and also exalts the humble peasant. It describes the mean and vulgar works of man, and also high objects, enduring things. But whatever the theme the treatment must be elevating, and the man of letters must seek to invest it with beauty and sincerity. A false or strained note will mean failure". This is the well considered judgment of a distinguished scholar, as expressed by him in the course of an article, under the caption quoted above, contributed to the *Aryan Path* of April, 1943. But what Professor Jha has said is the result of his careful and extensive studies of world-literature, but puts in a terse form the verdict of the literary and scholarly world in all ages. To quote but one classical authority on the subject of poets and poetry, Plato—than whom there is no higher authority on the best forms of literature, and who himself is the greatest literary artist, who bequeathed to us those inimitably fascinating prose poems in his world famous *Dialogues*—wrote (in his *Apology*) as follows :—"Not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration". Again, he reaffirmed and emphasised (in his *Ion*) the same view :—"All good poets compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. The poet has no power of creation until he has been inspired". So according to Plato, it is neither wisdom, nor art, but inspiration that is the sole test of creative poetry, in the true sense of the term. And the question is : Can Iqbal be regarded as an inspired poet—inspired in the sense expressed by Plato?



Those who profess to find inspiration in Iqbal's poems are quite welcome to adhere to their view, and I shall not question their right to do so. If they still agree with the verdict of Professor Sharif—which I have placed at the top of this chapter—that “Iqbal is greater than Dante in indissolubly blending poetry and philosophy,” they are welcome to that view ; and I shall be the last person to find fault with them, for (in matters of difference of opinion) I extend to others the same tolerance which I expect them to extend to me. But they, who may share the views expressed by me, are entitled to hold that by applying a critical standard in the appraisal of the highest forms of literary art—particularly as expressed through the medium of verse—they find in the vast bulk of Iqbal's poems much dogmatic preaching on subjects theological and philosophical, much uncritical criticism of what he dislikes, or could not bring himself to appreciate or approve, but they light upon very little, indeed, on what could justly be declared, the result of inspiration, as contemplated by Plato. I may quote, in support of my view, the opinion of a competent scholar—Professor Kalimuddin Ahmad, who, in discussing the works of Iqbal in his critical work (in Urdu) called *Urdu Shairi per ek Nazar* (“A Glance at Urdu poetry”) writes:—“Iqbal was a poet for whom Urdu poetry had been waiting. He was conversant with the literature of the East and the West. He understood the meaning of poetry. He could have done all that he wished. He could have extricated Urdu poetry from the depth of degradation. It was not difficult for him to enthrone Urdu poetry on the highest peak of glory. But he did not give his thought to it”. My views are precisely those held by Professor Kalimuddin Ahmad; but I have assigned a reason for Iqbal's failure as a great poet, namely, owing to his poetry being dominated by theological dogmatism.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Differences Due to Divergence in Interpretation

If men would consider not so much wherein they differ as wherein they agree, there would be far less of uncharitableness in the world.

—Addison (in the *Spectator*).

Belief in a personal moral God has led only too frequently to theoretical dogmatism and practical intolerance. In the name of the Divine, moral men have committed many an atrocity.

—Aldous Huxley (*Ends and Means*).

It is not given to man to know the whole Truth. His duty lies in living upto the Truth he sees. Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by the Truth as he sees it. The golden rule of conduct is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike, and we shall always see Truth in fragment, and from different angles of vision.

—Mahatma Gandhi (in *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*).

The Absolute is apprehended by us in numberless ways. Each religion selects some one aspect of it, and makes it the centre to which others are referred. Thought advances to new concepts by the reinterpretation of old ones. All great thought is capable of bearing so many meanings which were not in the minds of their authors.

—Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (in his *Gandama : The Buddha*).

Acute differences divide mankind—nations, peoples, races and tribes ; as also religious communities, sects and sects no less than individuals—in almost all matters, spiritual and secular, due to the divergence in outlook and interpretation of things around us. This great psychological truth is realized by few persons—in even educated circles—in this work-a-day world. If a large section of humanity had followed the maxim of the great English essayist, Addison—which I have taken as a motto to this chapter—it would have been all to the good, and the world

quite a happy place to live in. Unfortunately, numerous causes—which will be detailed later, in this chapter—operate to bring about divergences in the mentality of human beings, with the inevitable result that there exist, in all countries, great differences of opinion, and diversities in thought, in almost all matters relating to subjects both worldly and other worldly. Such divergences are mainly due to the exercise of individual judgment, or personal interpretation, of the phenomena around us, which differs in the case of each person according to his or her lights. It is remarkable that dealing with this very subject (in his famous work on India) Alberuni, the tenth-century Persian scholar and traveller, wrote: "The belief of educated and uneducated people differs in every nation, for the former strive to conceive abstract ideas, and to define general principles; whilst the latter do not pass beyond the apprehension of the senses and are content with derived rules, without caring for details, especially in questions of religion and law, regarding which opinions and interests are divided."

These remarkable observations of Alberuni are scientifically accurate, but their scope may well be extended by saying that due to mental divergence such differences exist not only between the educated and the uneducated, but even amongst the educated themselves. In the India of to-day, for instance, it is, in a larger measure, educated Hindus and educated Muslims rather than the uneducated masses that have wider political differences between them, with the result that the progress of the country is definitely held up. And what is true in the sphere of politics is equally true in that of other activities. Religion, which should have brought peace and goodwill to mankind, has been a source of bitterness, acerbity, and strife, for ages past, in almost every country of the world, due to the diverse interpretations of the scriptures of each faith by the various cults, sects and groups—all professing to

follow the same creed. And the same cause operating in the field of letters has brought about (in India, at any rate) a spirit of intolerance which will not permit of the expression of an opinion different from that held by any one particular literary cult. The appearance of a critical comment—howsoever fair, reasonable or moderate—brings down on the critic the concentrated wrath of the votaries of the party, group, or cult criticised, as much in the political as in the religious or literary sphere of activity. Nothing is more depressing to a fair-minded person, in India, than the perusal of our newspapers and journals pledged to support a political party, a religious community, a literary cult, or a social fraternity. Each of them appears to believe, or believes, in its own infallibility, and has for its motto "orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy is another man's doxy". Even Literature is not free from such a pernicious influence. There has existed, for many years in a large part of India, an acrimonious Hindi-Urdu controversy, which has affected for the worse the development of literary and cultural aspects of life; and there are besides amongst the writers in each of these two literary idioms various factions representing numerous schools, the existence of which is a serious hindrance to the harmonious development of the culture of the country.

### III

This sorry spectacle is manifested almost every day in the press of the country. To take but one instance, relating to the works of Iqbal himself. It would appear that not long ago the Hon'ble Sir Jogendra Singh—the then member of the Government of India, a highly cultured and enlightened gentleman, a well-known scholar, and a friend of Iqbal's—expressed his views, in a manner befitting his position in the world of letters, on the subject-matter of Iqbal's poems, and its treatment by the poet. But as they did not meet with the approval of an undiscerning admirer of Iqbal's, he burst forth into a long tirade

against Sir Jogendra, of which the opening lines are as follows :—" There is a verse of the late Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal, in which he deploras :

On my death each one did cry

'He was a friend of mine.'

But none did care a jot to find

To whom said I, and what, and whence was I.

The writer continues:—"Like most of his poetic utterances this one too does not in any way exaggerate the truth, and to-day if we find a crop of the late Allama's acquaintances of this sort, there is no reason to feel amazed. For example, there is Sir Jogendra Singh who has failed to understand the man he (Iqbal) was, and the ideals he stood and fought for, in his own way, in the world. To say the least, it is a very narrow, and a wholly unjust view of Iqbal and his mission". Evidently, according to the writer, no one can be considered fair-minded and just unless he is prepared to echo the popular sentiments about Iqbal. If one cannot honestly accept and express such a view, one is apt to be charged, (as Sir Jogendra had been) with having "failed to understand the man he (Iqbal) was, and the ideals he stood and fought for, in his own way, in the world". Such a mentality on the part of the indiscriminate admirers of a poet is extremely to be regretted, as leading to intolerance in the sphere of Literature, which should be wholly free from bitterness.

A poet's themes and his treatment of them are subjects on which, for obvious reasons, much can be said on both sides. The story of "Uncle Toby and the Fly" in Sterne's famous work) is apposite to the point under consideration. When the fly persisted in buzzing round and round dear Uncle Toby's big, red, nose, he gently caught hold of it, went to the window, and opening it, let out the fly—saying to it: "go away little fly, the world is large enough both for you and me". Surely, the world is large enough for the holders of divergent views on most, if not all, questions; and men

holding opposite views even on poets can agree to differ, if they cannot agree to be of one mind on the subject. It is impelled by such considerations that I have felt daring enough to judge of Iqbal's work and worth as a poet, from the standpoint of a critic rather than of an uncritical admirer; for I would rather err with Plato than be right with any one else, when that greatest exponent of the highest and noblest idealism declared that "I must not honour a man more than I honour truth, but must utter what I have to say".

#### IV.

In the chapter in which I compared the work for the uplift of the Indian Muslims by Altaf Hussain Hali, and Iqbal, respectively, I dealt with their achievements in this particular respect. It remains to add my view of the mentality of Iqbal as a reformer, and also as an interpreter of Islam. Did Iqbal possess a truly reforming mind? Did his mind display the characteristics of a great reformer—the will to do, the soul to dare, the strength born of deep-rooted conviction, and the courage to carry it out, at all costs, even at the sacrifice of popularity—which one naturally associates with great reformers, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and Mr. Behramji Malabari, to mention (in chronological order) but a few only of the nineteenth century Indian reformers? Or was Iqbal a milk-and-water reformer—afraid to lift his arm to strike a blow for the right cause, with all the strength of conviction and earnestness? We have seen enough of his treatment in style and diction, which ignored Ghalib's sound advice that "while warineth in language be permissible, yet not to an extent that every one you talk to complains about it". But what about his mentality as a reformer, apart from his poetic diction, imagery, and technique, in expressing himself? A concrete example will clarify the matter. While Iqbal welcomed reform in Turkey as "creating

new values", his own attitude to reform generally is expressed, as follows, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* :—" We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam ; but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration, and race-idea, which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever, may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion. Further, our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of check on their youthful fervour".

The passage, quoted above, brings Iqbal's painfully halting attitude to reform, generally, into such bold relief, that no comments are necessary to drive home its significance. All that need be said is that had Mustafa Kemal, and the reformers in other Islamic countries accepted and acted on the opinion expressed by Iqbal, in the passage quoted above, Turkey would not have been a living nation to-day, and some of the Muslim States in Asia and Africa, which still exist, would have long since ceased to be ; while " the liberal movement " in Islam, had it followed Iqbal's guidance, would have long since sunk into the dust. Even as it is " the liberal movement " (amongst Indian Muslims, at any rate) is in a moribund condition, in spite of the strenuous and zealous efforts, lasting for more than half a century, of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan,— who was ridiculed and scoffed at as a " *naichari* " (that is a naturalist or rationalist), of Altaf Hussain Hali in his famous *Musaddas*, and some other reformers who had since followed in their wake. But in spite of all that the reforming spirit amongst Indian Muslims is still not so advanced as it well might have been ; and it is a tenable contention that

(unlike Hali's *Musaddas*) the works of Iqbal not only did not help but actually retarded the advance and progress of the Indo-Muslim mind by its being directed towards dogmatic illiberalism, instead of being pushed into channels of well-reasoned progress. The causes that led to such an attitude in Iqbal are set forth clearly by himself in the passage quoted above, namely his conviction that "liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration" (yes, thank God, it has), and that "race-idea—(that is a spirit of nationalism, which Iqbal deprecated and detested) appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever". Had Iqbal been a liberal and progressive thinker he would have advised his fellow-Muslims how to adapt themselves to their ever-changing environment (as had been done, for instance, by the Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer Ali in his *Spirit of Islam*), but instead of it he succumbed to the temptation of preaching dogmatics, and thereby trying to stem the tide of reform amongst his co-religionists. To the extent he tried to do so he misunderstood, and consequently mis-appreciated the spirit of Islam, which when unsmothered by dogmatics, stands as much for reform and progress as any other religion—if not even in a larger measure. Viewed in this light, I cannot accept Iqbal's interpretation of Islam as sound, correct, or of advantage even to Muslims.

## V

I am aware that in saying so I may be charged by the many indiscriminate admirers of Iqbal with daring, if nothing worse. But a little consideration will show that stating that a person's interpretation is incorrect or unsound, carries with it no reflection whatsoever. The interpretation of an author, or of a human character, or a religion—or, for the matter of that, of anything in the phenomena around us—is mainly a subjective process, and is entirely dependent on a man's physical environment,



mental adaptability, cultural associations, and other things in the surroundings in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. This is a scientific truism which is now understood in all cultured circles, not only in the West, but even in the East. In Dr. Syed Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* it is emphasised in more than one place, in connection with a correct appreciation of Islam. Thus we read:—"The national characteristics of a people, the climatic conditions under which they exist, the natural features of the country in which they dwell, the influence of older cults, all give a colour and complexion to their faiths and doctrines. It is the same in Christendom and Islam". And again:—"All religions have different phases; they vary according to the climatic and economic conditions of the country, the environments and education of the people, their national characteristics, and a multitude of other causes". And these causes operate so strongly on all peoples, nations, races and religious communities, that as a result of them we find existing side by side numerous groups, cults and sects, widely differing from one another, even in one and the same religious community, due to their divergent interpretation of the religion which they all claim to profess. To illustrate his point made in the two passages quoted above, Dr. Syed Ameer Ali records the fact that "in Islam also (be it said with certain exceptions) each sect condemns the others to perdition, not eternal (as the orthodox Christian charitably hopes it will be) but sufficiently prolonged to make them feel the evils of a different doxy from its own."

Now what is true of groups, or cults, or sects, in the matter of the interpretation of things around us, due to the causes set forth above, is equally applicable to the case of each particular individual. Though each individual ostensibly belongs to a group, or cult, or sect, of a religious community, or to a religious community itself, yet when

you come to examine his beliefs carefully, you find that they differ substantially from those of others in that community, cult, or sect. That is so in even smaller groups—not necessarily religions, but of other kinds—political, social, educational, economic, and many others. To take an instance from the political sphere of activities in the country, I may refer to the National Liberal Federation, which comprises but a handful of cultured and enlightened individuals; and yet it is an open secret that between the elderly leaders of the movement, and those of the younger generation, there is considerable difference of opinion on almost every question of current politics in the country. In Bengal, for some years, Congressmen had been divided into two hostile camps. Thus a close examination of the religious convictions of people discloses the fact that though professing to belong to one (large or small) group, each of them interprets the sacred books of the faith, and their teachings, according to his or her lights, as the result of the influence of the operating causes enumerated by Dr Syed Ameer Ali in the passages quoted above from his *Spirit of Islam*. In a non-creedistic religion, like Hinduism, such divergent interpretations are so markedly obvious that it has been not unjustly said that no two Hindus (some say “thank God”) think alike in matters religious. But it exists equally, though not so patently as in Hinduism, in other religions as well. There are distinct sects not only amongst the large religious communities of Buddhists, Christians and Muslims, but even in such a small group as of Parsees, conclusively establishing the contention that, when all is said and done, the interpretation of the phenomena of life is a subjective process, and each individual thinks for himself even in matters of religion—or rather makes for himself his own religion—as in all other matters. These psychological truths are now being more and more widely appreciated and accepted all over the world—though they may yet be, at a discount,

in India, owing to our educational and cultural backwardness.

## VI

I shall illustrate the point about divergence in interpretation due to a multitude of causes, by referring to, what is called in literary parlance, "the Omar Khayyam cult". In his *Literary History of Persia*, this is what Professor Browne writes of that well-known Persian poet: "Omar Khayyam, who is not ranked by the Persians as a poet of even the third class, enjoys a celebrity in Europe and America far greater than that which he has attained in his own country, where his fame rests rather on his mathematical and astronomical than on his poetical achievements". When the Persian monarch, Shah Nasir-uddin, visited Europe, in 1889, and heard of the establishment of Omar Khayyam Clubs, in London and other metropolitan cities, he split his sides with laughter at what appeared to him the ridiculous idea of forming literary clubs to study the poetry of an astronomer and mathematician, and said that this was the biggest joke he had known the Europeans to have perpetrated. And yet we know that ever since the publication, in 1859, of Fitzgerald's free adaptation into English of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam, the cult for the study of the works and genius of that poet had been steadily growing, and had spread long since from Europe to America. Now what is it all due to, if not to a divergence in interpretation of Omar's poems between the Persians and the Westerners? And the same law of divergence in the interpretation of the phenomena around us operates in almost all other spheres in this universe, since each human being puts his own construction—according to his lights—on what he sees, or feels, or thinks.

Neither should it be supposed that all readers of Omar Khayyam's poems in the West are of one mind on the subject, and that there are no divergences in their opinions, due to differences in outlook and interpretation.

Although a large number of Europeans and Americans regard Omar as a mystic of mystics, a poet of poets, and a sufi of sufis, yet there are a few eminent poets, essayists, and scholars, who had actually condemned the much-belauded quatrains in which Omar's reputation as a poet rests in the western countries. For instance, none other than Tennyson had expressed his view of the Persian poet, after reading his quatrains, as "that large infidel, Omar". Carlyle went further in his denunciation of him as "that damned Persian blackguard"; while a scholarly prelate, a Doctor of Divinity, described him, as "the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Devil"; and another called Omar "a dram-drinking, drivelling, droning dotard". Such instances can easily be multiplied from Western literature. Nor is the literature of the East by any means silent on the subject under consideration. I opened the discussion in this chapter, by taking as my text a passage from Alberuni's India—a monumental work written in Arabic by a Persian scholar, who lived between the tenth and eleventh centuries of the Christian era. I may conclude this discussion by quoting a couplet from the greatest Hindi poet—Tulsi Das—who lived between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Describing the scene of the tournament at which Sri Ram Chandra bent the bow of Siva, the poet says of the crowd assembled on that occasion that "each of them saw in Sri Ram's appearance something which pleased him according to the spectator's own desire and fancy". For one to say, therefore, that another person's interpretation is wrong or unsound means nothing more than this that the declarant's own construction differs from that of the person whose interpretation he is, on that account, not prepared to accept. Keeping these psychological truths in mind, I shall place before the reader, in the next chapter, my own interpretation of Islam, which is supported by the views of some cultured and enlightened Muslims, and in a subsequent chapter Iqbal's interpretation of Islam, as I understand it.

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Author's Interpretation of Islam

بے پرستم کانرم از اهل ایمان نیستم  
سوء مسجد میروم گر چه مسلمان نیستم

"I am an idolator and an infidel; and do not belong to the cult of the Faithful. But although I am not a Musalman, I send my way towards the mosque". (Sarmad).

آخر کو کفر عشق میں ایمان ہو گیا  
میں بے پرستیدوں میں مسلمان ہو گیا

"At last my infidelity was turned into Faith (Islam), through the medium of love, and thus through idolatry I become a Muslim".—"Dagh".

"Perhaps our truths are relative, and absolute truth is beyond us. Different persons may, and do, take different views of truth; and each individual is powerfully influenced by his own back-ground, training, and impulses. Truth is for each individual what he himself feels, and knows to be true."

—Jawaharlal Nehru (in his *Discovery of India*.)

"The basic tenet of Islam is universal brotherhood; for God is not only our God, but the God of one and all".

—(Extract from an address delivered in November, 1942, by the Hon'ble Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, the Premier of Sindh).

"God is without passions; neither is He affected by any emotion of pleasure or pain. God does not hate or love any one".

—Spinoza.

"God sends His teachers unto every age,

To every clime, and every race of men,

With revelations fitted to their growth

And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth

Into the selfish rule of one sole race:

Therefore, each form of worship that hath swayed

The life of man, and given it to grasp  
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,  
 Infolds some germs of goodness and of right;  
 Else never had the eager soul, which loathes  
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,  
 Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

—J. R. Lowell (*Rhoccus*).

## II

The vast bulk of educated Muslims in India have persuaded themselves that Hindus are inappreciative of what Islam stands for, that they cannot admire its beauty, grandeur, or the eternal truth it embodies; and some even go further and hold that non-Muslims in general, and Hindus in particular, are obsessed with such a strong prejudice against Islam as to have become absolutely incapable of appreciating its many striking merits as a great religion appealing to large sections of humanity. No belief, or impression, could be more unfortunate, or farther from truth—so far, at any rate, as Hindus are concerned. Hinduism may justly be charged with many sins of commission and omission,—especially in its treatment of the depressed classes, now known as Harijans—but all fair-minded students of Comparative Religion, and of the History of Religions, are agreed that Hinduism has been, from time immemorial, the most tolerant, the most catholic, and the most cosmopolitan of the world's great religions, and its votaries had developed a rare capacity for not only appreciating, but even assimilating in it, all that is good, great, and noble in the teachings of other religions—which spirit had enabled Hinduism to withstand, and survive, the competition by its rivals for ages out of mind. As such, it is a matter for deep regret that few Indian Muslims have as yet realised this strikingly attractive feature of Hinduism, and continue to regard almost every Hindu as unfriendly to Islam. The interpretation of Islam offered by me in this chapter, supported as it is by the views of several cultured and enlightened Muslims, may

possibly help to remove such a misapprehension, and also bring into relief the underlying differences between the two interpretations, that offered by me in this book, and that expressed by Iqbal in his poems.

### III

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer—sometime a member of the Government of Madras, and later of the Government of India, and for years the administrative head of the State of Travancore—is a man of broad and catholic sympathies, and his understanding and appreciation of Islam are marked by a deep and sympathetic insight. Speaking at the opening of a mosque, in the State of Travancore, he referred in vivid terms to the glory of Islam, and also paid an eloquent and just tribute to the message of the Prophet of that great religion. He emphasised that Islam was the only religion which had, in the main, and effectually, obliterated all distinctions of colour and race, since to the Muslims all the followers of Islam—whether Negro, or the Arab, or the members of any other country, class or community—were alike brethren in a real and vital sense, a statement which, in my opinion, can scarcely be made equally correctly of the votaries of some other religions. Putting that message in its historical perspective Sir Ramaswamy said :—“To the Arabs, after many years of idol worship, there came a message, through the Prophet, which, in the language of our own *Upanishads*, can be stated as *ekameva advitiyam Brahma* ( “the ONE without a second ” ). That message came to the Prophet, and that message he not only experienced in himself, but expounded in a manner which the world cannot easily forget.” He continued :—“ The religion of Muhammad, as conceived by the great Prophet, was not a religion of division, or persecution, or hatred. It was not a fissiparous religion, but was a religion of tolerance and toleration. It was essential to remember that central message, and to try to live up to the teachings of the great Prophet ”.

In expressing himself as he did, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy spoke not only for himself, but for hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of enlightened and cultured Hindus. Read the biographies of the Prophet of Islam as written by the sceptic Gibbon (in his immortal *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) or by the orthodox Christian, Sir William Muir, or by the rationalist Muslim, Dr. Syed Ameer Ali, and you will not fail to be impressed with the fact that Muhammad (on whom be peace) lived and died preaching the Unity of God, and working for the union of Islamic brotherhood—and thus Unity and Union were his watchwords. This fact alone should make any cultured and enlightened person revere the Prophet, as one of the greatest humanitarians that the world had produced. For my part, when I think of the noble, simple, and practical teachings of the Prophet and of the manifold services rendered by Islam to humanity, during the now more than thirteen centuries of its existence—specially in the matter of the total extinction by it of racial and colour prejudices, which still exist, in a marked degree, amongst the followers of some other religions—I feel I may justly exclaim :—" O Muhammad, Muhammad, thou the most successful destroyer of all mockery in God-worship, and the greatest redeemer of coloured races, thou, who established in the actual practices of life the fundamental principle of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Islam—irrespective of considerations of race or colour—O Muhammad, well art thou rewarded by the gratitude of millions of souls, who even to this day come flocking into thy fold in countries of far-off Africa, where the protagonists of some other faiths, with their many subtle and sublime theological doctrines, but unhappily associated with the use of arms and alcohol in their ordinary dealings with the "natives" of those lands, cry in vain, as in a wilderness"!

#### IV

Take, again, the Muslim prayer which is offered to the



Almighty, five-times in the day, in all countries wherever the votaries of Islam reside. How simple and intelligible it is to the vast bulk of Muslims, and in what a marked contrast it stands to the complex prayers of the followers of some other creeds. It constitutes the opening chapter (called the *Surah Fateha*) of the Holy Qur'an, and since it is believed to be the very words vouchsafed by Allah, it goes straight to the heart of every votary of Islam. It may, however, suitably be adopted for prayer by all religious-minded persons, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. There are many translations of it, in numerous languages, in prose, but I would prefer to quote first the rendering into English verse by an Indo-Muslim poet, which brings out its true significance and universal appeal to mankind.

All praise is due to Thee, O God !  
None other than Thee we adore.  
Thou art the Master of the Worlds  
Thine aid alone do we implore.

Thou art Compassion; lead Thou on  
To Thy right path our human race,  
Thy Mercy floweth evermore,  
Do guide us to the path of Grace.

Thou art the Lord of judgment-day,  
For sure shall all be judged by Thee,  
O keep us off the path of Sin  
And Error's way. So mote it be !

The prose translation of the *Sura Fateha*, of which the poem quoted above is a rendering in verse, is as follows, as excellently translated by a cultured Indo-Muslim lady.

Praise be to Thee my God, Lord of the Worlds :  
O Merciful, Compassionate art Thou !  
The King of all on Day of Reckoning,  
Thee only do we worship and adore,  
To Thee, Most Merciful, we cry for help !

## V

The opening verses of the Qur'an are thus the pith of Islamic teachings. They clearly enjoin that God is not the Lord of the Muslims alone, but that He is Lord of the entire universe, and the Father of all mankind. There are many other no less significant declarations in the Qur'an, a few of which may be quoted : " Say (unto the people) ; dispute ye with us concerning God, when He is our Lord and your Lord (too). We are responsible for our doings, and ye for yours " surah 2, verse 139 . The conception of God, as expressed in the Qur'an, is not therefore, confined to Muslims alone ; nor does it exclude anything in its scope that is good in other great religions. This view is supported further by the statement : " Mankind were one people, and God sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings, and as warners, and revealed therewith the scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed " (surah 2, verse 213). The above verses thus declare the universal law according to which prophets had appeared, at one time or other, among all races and communities, because all humanity constitutes but one people, and the same Divine law applies to them all.

After having proclaimed the unity of God, the Qur'an unequivocally declares the equality of all humanity : " O, mankind ! be careful of your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women " (surah 4, verse 1). This verse also confirms the view that the Qur'an is intended for all humanity, and not for Muslims alone, as it makes no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. What is rightly emphasised in it is the fundamental oneness of mankind, the fact that humanity is one and indivisible, and that differences in mere external things are unim-

portant and superficial. To divide mankind, therefore, either racially, socially, or religiously, into water-tight compartments, would be positively unwarranted by the Divine injunctions laid down in the Qnr'an. There are several other passages in the Qnr'an supporting the same view : " Whosoever surrendereth his purpose to God, while doing good, his reward is with his Lord " (surah 2, verse 112). The use of the word " whosoever " in this, and also in other passages, is highly significant, as it obviously applies to all human beings wholly irrespective of the creed they may profess. Concerned with humanity, at large, in its appeal, this Qnr'anic injunction obviously discomtences the very idea that those professing only a specific creed will attain salvation, and no others. On the contrary, it is an emphatic declaration that it is only by the complete submission of one's will to God, and the doing of good to His creatures, that one shall be able to achieve beatific beatitude.

I may quote some other passages relevant to the discussion : " O ye who believe ! be steadfast witness for God in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly Deal justly that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to God (surah 5, verse 8). Again : " And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo ! here, indeed, are portents for men of knowledge " (surah 30, verse 22). The above verses lucidly point to the essential unity that underlies mankind under superficial diversity, in this world. To put it in the language of the lawyer, these verses impress the truth of the fundamental identity of mankind under the circumstantial variety of colour, language, race and religion. The view is expressed repeatedly : " O, mankind ! We have created you male and female, and have made you peoples and tribes that ye may know one

another. The noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct "(surah 49, verse 13). Nothing could be clearer than the fact that these injunctions are addressed to all mankind, and not only to Muslims ; as colour, language, race or tribe—and any other outwardly differentiating thing, for the matter of that—is but a convenient distinction amongst mankind to enable it to realise seemingly divergent characteristics, under substantial identity, since the Qur'an insists that, before God, humanity is one. Further it is unequivocally stressed that he alone is to receive the highest distinction before God, who is most righteous, in his thought and action. It is, therefore, laid down, as a corollary to the previous declaration, that : " he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it " (surah 99, verses 7 and 8) , which is the exact equivalent to the Biblical dictum : " By their actions, ye shall judge them ". Every act, according to this sublime doctrine, results in a consequence, and this universal law of — what Hindus and Buddhists call *karma* — applies equally to all alike, irrespective of their being Muslims or non-Muslims, or following any particular creed.

The above passages, quoted from the Qur'an, are obviously illustrative rather than exhaustive. Of the many others that could be cited, take the injunction : " Do not abuse whom they call upon besides Allah ; lest, exceeding limits, they should abuse Allah out of ignorance ". Last, but not least, there is that great charter of liberty, and toleration, in matters religious, the memorable declaration that " there should be no compulsion in religion ". The Qur'an defines—or rather sums up—Islam as follows :—  
 " There is no distinction between Prophets. We make no

and Issac and Jacob, and the tribes; and that which hath been delivered to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between them". Again, " Verily, those who believe (the Muslims), and those who are Jews, Christians or Sabaeans; and *whoever* hath faith in God and the last day (future existence), and worketh that which is right and good, for them shall be the reward with their Lord ". The same sentiments " repeated in a hundred other passages " as well put by Dr. Syed Ameer Ali—" prove that Islam does not confine 'salvation' to the followers of Muhammad alone "; for do we not read in that Holy book that " to every one have we given a law and a way. And if God had pleased, He would have made you all (all mankind) one people (people of one religion). But He hath done otherwise, that He might try you in that which He hath severally given unto you, wherefore press forward in good works. Unto God shall ye return, and He will tell you that concerning which ye disagree ". What words could convey more clearly, or vindicate more emphatically, the catholicity and the basic toleration of Islam than the passages quoted above from the Qur'an itself, which, containing as it does the injunctions of Allah, is the very fountain-head of Islam.

Quoting St. Peter, who said (Acts X 34-35), " of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every people he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him ", Sir Ahmed Hussain writes:—" The same is the spirit of the oft-repeated definition of Muslims, in the Quran, namely " those who believe and work righteousness ". Perhaps the greatest Islamic poet-philosopher, Jalal-ud-din Rumi—one of the chief alleged guides of Iqbal—says in his celebrated *Masnawi* Bk. ii, story 12) : " All religions are in substance one and the same "; and the philosophically-minded English poet, Tennyson,

had happily rendered the noble Islamic ideal of self-surrender (or resignation to the will of God), and had also solved the troublesome question of free-will and determinism in the famous line (in *In Memoriam*), "Our wills are ours to make them Thine"—which is rightly held to be the very meaning of the word "Islam", and which brings into relief the true significance of its inward spirit of spirituality. As well put by Sir Ahmed Hussain :—"All religions are, and purport to be, paths leading to one and the same citadel of Truth", and he quotes in support of his view the declaration of Lord Sri Krishna in the *Bhagvad Geeta* :—"Mankind comes to Me along many roads; and on whatever road a man approaches Me on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are Mine". Dr. Caleb (an Indian Christian) in his beautiful verse rendering, into English, of the *Bhagvad Geeta* appends the following commentary to this particular *shloka* :—"This is a remarkable verse showing the catholicity of the religion inculcated in the *Geeta*. Its purport is that to the true seeker God is always accessible, the particular way in which He is sought being of no account". That is exactly the view emphasised by Sir Ahmed Hussain, in quoting this "remarkable verse" from the *Geeta*, for he recalls in connection with it the Arabic dictum :—*لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له* which means that "there is as many a way leading to God as there are minds". He also supports his view by quoting Kabir who sang as follows :—"The city of the Hindu God is Benares, and the city of the Muslim God is Mecca. But search your hearts, and there you will find the God both of Hindus and Muslims. If the Creator dwells in tabernacles only, whose dwelling is the Universe ?"

## VI

The Qur'an enjoins toleration in the remarkable passages quoted above. Perhaps the greatest Indian monarch, Asoka, inscribed (in the Rock Edict XII) a similar injunction :—

" A man must not do reverence to his own sect, or disparage that of another man, without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reasons only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect". Again, we read in the *Aiyeen-e-Albari*, dealing with the times of Akbar :—" Every sect favourably regards him who is faithful to its precepts, and, in truth, he is to be commended". Sir Ahmed Hussain, after quoting from Professor MacBride's book on zoology the observation that " mankind progresses by the appearance of individuals in whom (besides the inventive genius) the instincts of co-operation and loyalty are more strongly developed", writes that " it is precisely those instincts that Islam fosters by its doctrine of the universal brotherhood of Muslims".

As Dr. Hafiz Syed had written in the course of an article on " Brotherhood in Islam and Hinduism", in the *Prabudha Bharat* (an English monthly) for September, 1942 :—" All religions, without any exception, believe in the fatherhood of God as the creator, and source of all beings. If that be so, the only logical conclusion that we can draw from this faith is, that all men are equal in the sight of God. As Sri Krishna says (in the *Bhagavad Geeta*) : " The same am I to all beings ; there is none hateful to me, nor dear ; they who worship me with devotion are in me, and I am in them " The brotherhood of man is only a necessary corollary of the fatherhood of God.

The source and origin of mankind is one and the same, differ as much as we may in our outer forms, features, and temperaments. The oldest of the known religions of the world is Hindnism. All the sacred scriptures of this ancient faith contain clear and unmistakable references to the brotherhood of man. In the sixth chapter of the *Bhagvad Geeta* we read the following striking verses : ' He who regards impartially lovers, friends and foes, strangers, neutrals, foreigners, and relatives, also the righteous, and the unrighteous—he excelleth '. There are many other such *shlokas* ( in that scripture ). In the *Mahabharat* the following verse is most significant : ' He who is the friend of all beings, he who is intent on the welfare of all in act and thought and speech—ho only knoweth religion '. And ( we read ) in the *Vishnu Purana* : ' Knowing the Supreme to be in all beings, the wise extend love to all creatures undeviatingly '.

After expressing his views on Hinduism, as quoted above, Dr. Hafiz Syed then turns to Islam, as inculcated in the Qur'an, and also as enshrined in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace). He quotes from the Qur'an :—" O ye who helieve, let not one scoff or laugh at another people, as perchance, they may be better (in the eyes of God i.e., possess greater potentialities of doing good) than the scoffers '. He then refers to the sayings of the Prophet, Muhammad, who had declared : ' No man is a true heliever unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself. He, who is not affectionate to God's creatures, God will not be affectionate to him. Who is the most favoured of God ? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures. " The best of men is he from whom good acerueth to humanity." " All God's creatures are his family ; and he is the most beloved of God who trieth to do most good to God's creatures ". " Feed the hungry, and visit the sick, and assist any person oppressed



whether he be Muslim or non-Muslim'. 'Love your fellow-men first'. Dr. Hafiz Syed then sums up his views as follows:—"From these quotations it is abundantly clear that none of the greater religions of India ever taught anything anti-humanitarian, or encouraged intolerance or persecution". I agree with Dr. Syed that the *sine qua non*—equally according to the teachings of Hinduism and Islam—is the eschewal of the things that would differentiate, disunite and disrupt humanity, and the adoption and prizing of those that would unite, consolidate, and bring God's creatures together. That is the true ideal for humanity which (according to the true interpretation of Islam and Hinduism alike) should be followed—the ideal of live and let live, and of mutual toleration, which was preached in the seventh-century Arabia by Muhammad (on whom be peace), and before and after him, in India, by Asoka and Akbar, as recorded in one of the Indo-Buddhist Emperor's Rock Edicts, and the history of the Indo-Mughal Emperor's reign, as written by Abul Fazl in his *Aiyeen e-Akbari*—from both of which I have quoted above.

## VII

It is a sign of the times that the trend in India, to appraise and interpret, on sound lines, the religions of the country, is steadily growing. I have already quoted, in support of the correct interpretation of Islam, the views of some eminent, enlightened, and cultured Indian Muslims. I shall extract the opinion of one more Muslim—a nobleman and a leading lawyer of Hyderabad, Nawab Akbar Yar Jung Bahadur. Presiding over a meeting of Hyderabadites, on the occasion of the *Janma Ashtimi* (the anniversary of the birth of Lord Sri Krishna), the Nawab Bahadur emphasised the fundamental unity of religions, and the need for humanity to comprehend the oneness, in essentials, of the relations between man and God, as taught alike by Hinduism and Islam. The utterances of the Hyderabad nobleman are

so felicitously couched that I make no apology for making some excerpts from his address. Said he : " All religions were one and identical in spirit, in spite of different forms. Each age had raised the fundamental question, the why and wherefore of human life, and in each age had religion attempted to give an answer to it : and the answer (notwithstanding minor differences due to special geographical or psychological considerations) remained fundamentally identical. The emergence of different religions was due to the different emphasis they laid upon their respective answer to the same old and fundamental question of the goal of man. All religions postulated two fundamental principles, namely, belief in Divinity, and the immortality of the soul. In fundamentals, Islam and Hinduism were identical. Prophets of whatever religion, who brought to man the tidings of the Lord, were to be respected and cherished by all humanity. It is to be regretted that men should lose sight of the inner unity of religions, and magnify little external expressional differences and thus produce discord and disharmony, which were quite antagonistic to the true teachings of all religions. It would be better if, in the interests of intercommunal unity, mutual sympathy, and fraternal understanding, the Hindus and Muslims understood and realised the underlying oneness of their respective religions ".

But the Nawab Bahadur was not content with making these general observations. He went deeper into the matter, and as befitting the occasion, he referred to the teachings of the *Bhagvad Geeta* to which had also adverted Dr. Hafiz Syed in his article, from which I have quoted above. After having expounded at some length the injunctions of Allah as enshrined in the Qur'an, and with which the Muslim section of his audience was familiar, the Nawab Bahadur drew their attention pointedly to the teachings of the *Bhagvad Geeta* which—whoever the author of that Scripture—is popularly believed by the Hindus to

embody the teachings of the divinely inspired Lord Krishna himself. As the Nawab Bahadur stressed his point :—" The message the *Geeta* conveys, in one word, is to ' act ' (that is, discharge one's duty) regardless of consequences. Duty is to be adhered to, and man ought not to falter for any consideration whatsoever in discharging it. The *Geeta* is a great book, full of profound thought, and divine knowledge. This inspiring book would certainly afford real and lasting solution to all problems, as it was the outcome of great spiritual experience, and the culmination of ages of profound thinking, into the eternal verities of life, by the great saints of ancient India. Muslims had as much right and need to derive solace, inspiration, and guidance from the teachings of the *Geeta* as the Hindus." That is a consummation devoutly to be wished for.

Abul Fazl's famous book—*Aiyeeh e-Akbari*—is fairly well known in educated circles in India, both in its original Persian text, and also in the excellent English rendering by Messrs Blochmann and Jarrett; and it is thus not necessary to quote from it. But the monumental work on India by Alberuni is scarcely known outside the ranks of scholars, though an English translation of the Arabic text had been available since 1838, when the distinguished German Arabist, Dr. Edward Sachau, published his book, called *Alberuni's India* (in two volumes) with elucidative notes and indices. Alberuni (973-1048), a Persian, but a native of Khiva, in Central Asia, came to India, lived in the country for many years, mastered the Sanskrit language and literature, and wrote, in Arabic, his monumental work on India, which is our principal source of information about our country during the period of the many expeditions of Mahmud of Ghazni. It is interesting to read the views expressed in his great book by this devout Muslim scholar about the Hindu conception of God. Writes Alberuni :—  
" The Hindus believe with regard to God that he is One,

eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that he does not resemble anything, nor does anything resemble him". Again :—" They call him *Iswara*, i.e. self-sufficing, beneficent, who gives without receiving. They consider the unity of God as absolute. The existence of God they consider as a real existence, because everything that exists, exists through Him. According to them, liberation is union with God, a being unattainable in thought, because he is sublime beyond all unlikeness and likeness". These few sentences from the lengthy dissertation on the religion of the Hindus, by Alberuni—who "in order to illustrate" his views, proceeds to quote, in support of his statements, "some extracts from their literature, lest the reader should think that our account is nothing but hearsay"—clearly convey the views of the Persian *savant* on the religion of Hindus, as interpreted by him in the light of their scriptures and religious literature, and also as the result of his experience of personal contact with them, extending over a fairly long period. Does the conception of the Divine amongst the Hindus, as expounded by Alberuni, differ substantially from that of God in Islam as laid down in the Qur'an, and stressed by liberal expositors of that great faith, in India and other countries? Let us compare the two.

### VIII

We have seen in the earlier portions of this chapter the sublimity of the injunctions laid down in the Qur'an, not only on man's relations with God, but also on catholicity, liberty, toleration and other matters of practical interest to humanity. Unfriendly critics of Islam charge it with inculcating anthropomorphism, but an unprejudiced perusal of the Qur'an, and the teaching of the Prophet (on whom be peace), will convince any fair-minded reader that that

criticism is untenable. On the contrary, he would be satisfied that it is the notable characteristic of Islam, as compared with the other great religions revealed to, or evolved by, humanity that it combines within itself a spirit of tolerance and cosmopolitanism, coupled with simplicity and practicability, consistent with reason and the moral intuition of mankind. Quranic Islam is a system based on a correct appreciation of the laws of human nature and progress, and one finds in it an idealism of high standard combined with rationalistic principles of great practicality. It does not ignore the limitations of human nature—as does, for instance, the theory of *ahimsa* or non-violence : it is not unduly metaphysical, and does not, therefore, entangle itself in useless theological controversies, but it takes a realistic and common-sense view of the needs of humanity, and tries by practical methods to elevate it from imperfection to perfection—perfection not necessarily ideal but substantially real. If it does not hold out the theoretical ideals of perfection preached by Jesus—"if thy brother smite thee on one cheek, turn thou the other also to him"—it has enjoined practical rules of conduct which are more suited to this work-a-day world, and better adapted to the needs of an imperfect humanity. At the same time, it teaches, as well as do other religions, that righteousness, forgiveness and benevolence should govern all our actions. "Who speaketh better," says the Qur'an, "than he who inviteth unto God, and worketh good? God and evil shall not be held equal. Turn away evil with that which is better". And again, speaking of Paradise—which is criticised rather uncritically by some persons as sensations—it says :—"It is prepared for the godly, who give alms in prosperity and adversity, who bridle their anger and forgive men, for God loveth the beneficent". Such, in brief, is Islam—if only rightly understood, soundly interpreted, and correctly appraised—a religion enjoining right thought, right

speech; and right action, founded on love, charity and, above all, the equality of mankind before the Lord.

This brief survey of the salient and striking features of Islam, as interpreted by me according to my lights—if accepted as correct and sound—would go to establish the contention that it had acknowledged reason as the greatest and highest function of man's intellect. And so long as reason held sway in Islamic history, the system worked quite satisfactorily. But when reason gave way to dogmatism in the Islamic world by the accidental, the particular, and the temporary, being exalted and installed on a higher place than the permanent, the stable, and the universal, there set in the period of decadence and decay. It was against this kind of gradual falling-back, or rather back-sliding from rationalism to dogmatism, that the great Arab sociologist, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), in his famous *Prolegomenon*, gave the following grave warning to the Muslims, in particular, but which remained unheeded:—

"It is only by attentive examination and well-sustained application that we can discover the truth, and guard ourselves against errors and mistakes. In fact, if we were merely to satisfy ourselves by reproducing the records transmitted by tradition without consulting the rules furnished by experiment, the nature, even of the particular civilisation or the circumstances which characterise the human society, if we are not to judge of the wants which occurred in distant times by those which are occurring under our eyes, if we are not to compare the past with the present, we can hardly escape from falling into errors and losing the way of truth". Weighier words on the subject of the progressive evolution of human society have not been written than by the world's first great sociologist, Ibn Khaldun, the Tunisian Arab of the fourteenth century, in the passage quoted above to which Indian Muslims, in particular, had paid little attention.

## IX

The subject of the struggle between dogmatism and rationalism in the history of Islam is dealt with at length, in a luminous chapter of his authoritative work (*The Spirit of Islam*) by the Right Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer Ali, and I shall make an extract from it in support of the view expressed above :—"How is it"—asks that learned historian of Islam "that since the twelfth century (of the Christian era) philosophy has almost died out among the followers of Islam, and an anti-rationalistic patristicism has taken possession of the bulk of the people? How is it that predestinarianism, though only one phase of the Quranic teachings, has become the predominant creed of a large number of Moslems"? He himself answers these questions as follows :—"For five centuries Islam assisted in the free intellectual development of humanity, but a reactionary movement then set in, and all at once the whole stream of human thought was altered. The cultivators of science and philosophy were pronounced to be beyond the pale of Islam". Having put his questions and himself answered them, as above, the learned author outlines at length the various stages of the struggle, between dogmatism and rationalism in Islamic history, and conclusively establishes his contention, as stated above. A careful perusal of his instructive sketch of that great struggle, would go to disprove the theory propounded by Iqbal as to Platonism, or Sufism, having been the main contributory cause to the downfall of Islamic States in Asia, and Europe. On the contrary; it is quite clear that the chief cause of the disruption of Muslim States was the installation of uncritical dogmatism over the sovereignty of reason, in the Islamic world—also subsidiary causes, such as the absolute rehabilitation of the letter of the law in place of the living spirit of the text, and the over-rigid adherence to formalities, observances,

and rituals in supercession of the Quranic injunction to consecrate reason in the solution of all matters affecting the progressive needs of society, and above all the extreme neglect to work in a spirit of righteousness in all relations of life.

To refer to some other injunctions of the 'Quran,' we find laid down in it :—“ The infidels are unjust doers ”—“ whoever they may be. And so if a professed follower of the Prophet is unjust in his actions, he also is obviously an “ infidel ”. “ The best of men is he from whom good accrueeth to humanity. All the creatures of Allah are His family ; and he is most beloved of Allah who trieth to do most good to God's creatures.” So that is the crucial test, and not birth as a Muslim, or as a non-Muslim. Again :—“ Those who believe not in Allah and His messengers, and who make a distinction between Allah and His messengers, and say, we believe in some, and reject others of them, and seek to take a middle way in this matter, these are unbelievers. But they who believe in Allah and His messengers, and make no distinction between any of them, unto those will He surely give their reward ; and Allah is gracious and merciful.” So no distinction is to be made amongst Allah's messengers, be they born in any epoch, or country—that seems to be the correct interpretation of the Quranic message ; and it is accepted as such by the Qadianis, and by some other reforming sects in Islam in this country, as also in progressive Muslim countries outside India, but not yet unfortunately by the majority of Indian Muslims.

Or take another injunction on the method to be adopted by Muslims for converting non-Muslims to their faith :—“ Invite men unto the way of thy Lord, by wisdom and mild exhortation ; and reason with them in gentle way ; and do thou bear opposition with patience. And be not thou grieved on account of the unbelievers ; neither



be thou troubled for that which they subtly devise ; for Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him; and those who are doers of good. If they embrace Islam, they are well directed ; but if they turn their back, verily unto thee belongs the preaching only." And yet there is another similar injunction :—" We have not appointed thee a keeper over them (the non-Muslims) ; neither art thou responsible for them. Revile not them unto whom they pray besides Allah, lest they wrongfully revile Allah without knowledge." All this sublime teaching is fully consistent with the basic idea which the Quran enjoins :—" Wheresoever ye turn there is the face of Allah." That is the fundamental tenet enjoined in the Quran, and not what passes as Islam in India today, amongst the vast majority of those who profess it. As well summed up by Prof. Abdul Majid Khan :—" In the sphere of belief, Islam enjoins equal respect for the founders of various faiths, and equal reverence for their messages. The idea of attaching varying degrees of divinity to different Prophets, is entirely foreign to the true spirit of Islam, because, in final analysis, religion is one. Hence the glorification of God, and service of humanity, are its two fundamentals."

To sum up my conception of Quranic Islam, as interpreted on sound and rational lines. I hold that Islam is, in substance, a religion possessing great powers of elasticity and resilience, and also has inherent in it a remarkable capacity for making progress from good to better, and from better to best. Islam also possesses in its very warp and woof (the Quran) the elements of progress by process of adaptation to the ever-changing needs and requirements of humanity, and of advancing along the march of events. Islam not only possesses, but had displayed in its history, a wonderful aptitude for assimilating and incorporating all that is good and wise in this world. If during the last few centuries the Islamic

countries had made little progress, had remained stationary, and had even receded in the battle of life in competition with other peoples, it had been due not to any intrinsic limitations in the Quranic teachings, but to an absolutely wrong interpretation of them, due to the tremendously unhealthy influence wielded by dogmatism on its expositors. To the extent Islam had freed itself from its dominance, during the current century, it had again made great progress in Turkey, and also, to a lesser extent, in Egypt, Persia, and some other Muslim countries outside India. And if Indian Muslims are still very backward, as compared with their co-religionists of some of the advanced and progressive countries, it is because a very large majority of them are still in the grip of dogmatism. Such is my appreciation of the noble and sublime spirituality of Islam, of the Prophet, of whom Dollinger—the famous nineteenth-century German theologian—justly declared that “no other mortal has ever, from the beginning of the world, exercised such an immeasurable influence upon the religious, moral and political relations of mankind as has the Arab, Muhammad”—on whom be blessings and peace.

---

## CHAPTER XX.

### Iqbal's Interpretation of Islam.

اے شیخ اگر کفر سے ایمان جدا ہے  
بس جا ہے تسبیح میں زنا، نہ ہوتا

"O Sheikh, if iman (faith in Islam) were something different from *kufr* (infidelity), then the beads of the (Muslim) rosary should not have been strung on the sacred thread (of the Hindus).".

—Fughan (an Urdu poet of the eighteenth century).

"The teachings of Islam have not been placed before my non-Muslim countrymen in their true perspective. I advise my co-religionists to promote feelings of tolerance and good-will towards the sister communities in accordance with the true spirit of Islam".

—Extract from a speech delivered by the late Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Premier of the Panjab, at Lahore, in November, 1942.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth with falsehood, for the good, or  
evil side :

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the  
bloom or blight,

Parts the goat upon the left hand, and the sheep upon  
the right,

And the choice goes on for ever betwixt that darkness  
and that light.

—James Russell Lowell (The Crisis).

## II

Having set forth in the last chapter, the result of my interpretation of Islam as deducible, according to my lights, from the teachings of the Quran, I shall now briefly indicate the reasons why I differ from the interpreta-

tion of Islam as embodied by Iqbal in his works. It is a subject on which much could be written, but I intend to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, and I shall, therefore, take but a few examples. Take first Iqbal's conception of God as expressed in his poems. Is it philosophic, or anthropomorphic? That is the first question. Now "anthropomorphism" is defined in that authoritative work—the *Oxford Dictionary*—as including, amongst other things, the ascription of human attributes to the impersonal Deity; and the question is whether such a conception of God is or is not expressed in the works of Iqbal. To any careful reader of Iqbal's poems, the answer is bound to be in the affirmative. I need recall but one instance in support of my contention—the verses already quoted in an earlier chapter (which need not be quoted again) in which Iqbal complains to the Almighty of what the poet regards as the unfair treatment by God of the Muslims, and of his alleged favouritism to the polytheists, thus making God the avowed partisan of the latter. Iqbal invokes Him not only to favour the Muslims but to send down his wrath on the polytheists, winding up his complaint with the significant line:—"hast Thou no regard for Thy Unity"—as if the Unity of God depended on His favouring only one set or group of his creatures and not the rest of them! Now is that a philosophic or an anthropomorphic conception of God, and is it consistent with the numerous declarations, on the subject, inculcated by Allah Himself in the Quran, some only of which have been quoted in the last chapter. Who that knows the Quran, and appreciates its sublime teachings, on this subject, can have any reasonable doubt that Iqbal's interpretation, as embodied in the poem under discussion is unwarranted. The philosophic conception of God as laid down in the Quran (specially in the chapter called "Parity") has been expressed in equally explicit terms in other faiths also, in all ages. I have taken as a motto to

the preceding chapter, the dictum of one of the most famous philosophers, the Dutch Jew, Spinoza, which ends as follows :—“ God does not hate or love any one.” If so, what is the justification for a complaint or prayer to Him on the score of favouritism or partiality to one set of His creatures as against another, or of punishing one or the other by sending down His wrath on the alleged delinquents, at the instance of a supposed aggrieved party ? Surely, such a conception of the Almighty is not one which can be justified either by the text of the Quran, as it betrays a wholly wrong interpretation of the Divine Book; or by any philosophic conception of the Absolute.

### III

Had Iqbal been so minded he need not have gone to the Latin works of Spinoza—nor to any other foreign writer—to know the philosophic conception of God, as he would have easily found in any of the standard histories of India the text of the letter, in Persian, despatched to Aurangzeb by a Hindu ruler, remonstrating with him when that Emperor—departing from the settled policy of his three immediate forerunners (Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan)—issued orders imposing the Jazia tax on his non-Muslim subjects. That letter, which is a truly remarkable document, covers a large ground in surveying Aurangzeb's administrative policy, but I shall quote from it only a short passage which is relevant to the discussion on the philosophic, as opposed to anthropomorphic, conception of God :—“ May it please your Majesty, your royal ancestor Jalul-ud-deen Akbar, whose throne is now in Heaven, conducted the affairs of this Empire in equity and firm security for the space of fifty-two years, preserving every tribe of men in ease and happiness, and all equally enjoyed his countenance and favour : in so much that his people, in gratitude for the indiscriminating protection he afforded them, distinguished him by the appellation of *juggutguru* (teacher of mankind).

His Majesty Noor-ul-deen Jahagaer, likewise, whose dwelling is now in Paradise, extended, for a period of twenty-two years, the shadow of his protection over the heads of his people. Nor less did the illustrious Shah Jahao, by a propitious reign of thirty-two years, acquire to himself immortal reputation, the glorious reward of clemency and virtue. Such were the benevolent inclinations of your ancestors. If your Majesty places any faith in the Divine Book and Word of God (*i.e.*, the Quran), you will find there that God is styled in it *rabb ul alamin*, the Lord of mankind, and not *rabb-ul-musalmin*, the Lord of Moslems only. The Muslim and the non-Muslim are equal in His Presence. Distinctions of creed and colour are of His ordination. They are the diverse pigments used by the Divine Painter for blending His colours, and filling in the outlines of His pictures of the entire human species. If it be a (Muslim) mosque, the voice is raised in it in the prayer which is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a (Hindu) temple, the bell is rung in it for His adoration. To show bigotry for any man's creed and practices is really altering the words of the Holy Book (the Quran). To transgress the religion, or religious practices, of others is to set at naught the will of the Almighty; and it has been justly said: 'presume not to arraign the work of the Power Divine'.

To offer any comment on the above strikingly philosophic dissertation would be an act of supererogation—as it is quite explicit in its contention that the true Islamic conception of the Almighty is that of the Lord of Mankind, and not of that of a particular section of humanity. But it would be relevant to quote here the words of Col. Todd—who also quotes the text of the whole letter in his standard and monumental work, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. He says of this epistle that it is written "in a style of such uncompromising dignity, such lofty yet

temperate resolve, so much of soul-stirring rebuke mingled with a boundless and tolerating benevolence, such elevated ideas of the Divinity, with such pure philanthropy, that it may challenge competition with any epistolary production of any age, clime, or condition, in which are contained the true principles of Christianity. To the illustrious Gentile (Hindu), and such as acted as he did, was pointed that golden sentence of toleration :—' Those who have not the law, yet do by nature the things contained in the law, shall be a law unto themselves '. Higher than this there could be no praise, but it is fully deserved, as the Hindu ruler, responsible for this letter, displays an intensely keen appreciation of " elevated ideas of the Divinity ", such as are expounded in the scriptures of Islam and Hinduism alike.

In his introduction to the book containing the Iqbal Day Lectures, published under the title of *Aspects of Iqbal*, its editor—Dr. M. D. Taseer—draws attention to a matter which is germane to the discussion of the poet's interpretation of Islam. Writes Dr. Taseer : " He (Iqbal) became avowedly a Muslim socialist. Compare his treatment of Lenin in *Piari-i-Mashriq*, where he is lowered to the depth of the Kaiser, with that in *Bal-i-Jibrail* where he is canonised as a saint. In *Zarb-i-Kaleem* he hopes that the Soviet will turn Muslim, and opines that even now they are doing God's work unconsciously ". Now that is very significant. In spite of his being a " Muslim socialist ", and opining that the people of the Soviet " are doing God's work unconsciously ", Iqbal expresses the hope that " the Soviet will turn Muslim ". Was Iqbal's interpretation of Islam consistent with the teachings of the Quran, quoted in the last chapter, on the basis of which Dr. Syed Ameer Ali came to the conclusion (in his *Spirit of Islam*) that " Islam does not confine ' salvation ' to the followers of Muhammad alone "? Are not the various races and communities

constituting the present Soviet State within the category of those to whom, according to the teachings of the Quran, Apostles had come with the Divine Message? If so, what justification can there be on the part of any Muslim, who rightly comprehends the Message of the Prophet, (on whom be peace) to wish or pray that the Soviet might turn Muslim? What about the injunction, in the Quran, that "if God had pleased, He would have made all mankind people of one religion, but He hath done otherwise". Besides, whatever was the case in the earlier centuries, mass conversions are not likely to occur in the twentieth century, when even individual conversions carry with them an unsavoury odour, and a poet praying to the Almighty for mass conversion of humanity is not likely to see his wishful thinking realised. But it would be idle to pursue further Iqbal's interpretation on this point, as it is clear that, in spite of his professing to be the expositor of Islam, his interpretation is obviously vitiated by his either ignoring or misunderstanding the essential teachings of the Quran, and converting the Almighty from the transcendental immanent Deity into an anthropomorphic one, at the beck and call of the poet to carry out his wishes.

#### IV

I shall now take up another important point as illustrative of what I regard as misinterpretation—or, at any rate, misconception—on the part of Iqbal, of Quranic teachings, which has seriously affected his views, patently reflected in his poems—the question of nationalism (as now understood all over the world) against what he called "Islamic internationalism", or pan-Islamism. This is the key-note of Iqbal's poetry, and permeates it through and through. Vehemently-worded tirades against nationalism, and the exaltation of pan-Islamism, are the most striking features of Iqbal's poetry, and the many passages and stanzas reproduced in the earlier chapters of this book amply



be clearly a misinterpretation—or, in any view, a misconception—of the otherwise noble injunction of the Prophet.

But that line of argument apart, the conclusive proof of the untenability of Iqbal's view is that never since the existence of Islamic States have the words of the Holy Prophet been construed by any single Muslim State as an incentive to its attempting to form a political confederacy, or administrative alliance, such as is contemplated by Iqbal in his poems. One may carefully ransack the pages of the history of Islamic States without lighting upon even one single instance of any such confederacy as is sought, by Iqbal, to be foisted on the readers of his poems, based on the theory of Islamic internationalism or pan-Islamism. Surely, Iqbal could not have been so ignorant of Islamic history as to seriously believe that the Muslims cannot be grouped and classified by their nationality in the country of their domicile and that they form, or ever formed, one indivisible nation living in different parts of the world. The Turks would be mightily shocked if they were told that they formed part politically of one indivisible Muslim nationality along with the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Iraqis, the Persians, the Syrians, the Afghans, and some others, not to speak of the Indian Muslims. Though the conception of pan-Islamism, to which Iqbal had given expression so freely, had been stressed for a very short time by Sultan Abdul Hamid for his own personal aggrandisement, it had not been accepted by the Muslim world, and it perished with the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. To the Arabs such a polity of spiritual imperialism meant the Turkification of Arabia, and a tighter subjection to Turkish rule and, therefore, as soon as the first world war broke out, in 1914, they did not hesitate to join hands with non-Muslims to throw off the Turkish rule. The Turks themselves have never had a very high opinion of Arab rule. "The Arab mind", wrote one of the chief makers of

modern Turkey, " has a metaphysical conception of the universe. It looks upon legislative power as belonging to God, and executive power to the Caliph; and it regards the *ulemas* as intermediaries between God and the Caliph. It is different with the Turk. In his pre Islamic state he had been accustomed to man-made laws, and he is by nature more inclined than the other Islamic peoples to separate religion from the ordinary business of life ". No wonder, therefore, that the Turks do not subscribe to Iqbal's creed of one Islamic nationhood : and that is why Mustafa Kemal refused to receive the Khilafat Deputation from India.

As a matter of fact, the theory of Islamic oneness for political or administrative purposes had never found support among the various Moslim peoples or States. It was openly discarded by Kemal Atatürk within a few months of his election as the President of the Turkish Republic ; and when a letter, signed by two distinguished Indian Muslims, found its way into the Constantinople press, demanding greater respect for the Caliphate—which was then still nominally in existence—Kemal immediately pointed out in a *communiqué* that they were *protege* of the British Government, and that the whole thing was a subtle move in the British game of breaking Turkish nationalism by strengthening the Caliphate. The divergence between the nationalist Turk and the Indian Muslim, which dates from the time of the Khilafat agitation in this country, is noted in the book, called *Turkey* (in the 'Modern World Series' ) by Messrs Toynbee and Kirkwood. The relevant passage is extracted below :—" On 21st November, 1923, His Highness the Aga Khan and Mr. Ameer Ali, the two most distinguished of living Indian Muslims (who since the Armistice, had been indefatigable in pleading the Turkish cause before the British Government and the British public) addressed

a joint letter to Mustafa Kemal Pasha in which they begged him to spare the Ottoman Caliphate, and explained all that it stood for in the eyes of the Muslim World. This letter was as studiously moderate in tone as the pleas which its authors had addressed to British quarters during the preceding years ; but unfortunately they sent copies simultaneously to certain organs of the Turkish press in Constantinople, which the Turkish Nationalists suspected, rightly or wrongly, of being hostile to the Republic, and disposed to use the Caliphate as a rallying point for a movement of reaction. Since Constantinople was nearer to London than Angora, the copies of the letter were published in the journals before the originals reached the Turkish Government's hands, and this produced an explosion. The luckless editors were put on trial, for sedition, before a special revolutionary tribunal, and the writers of the letter were castigated in public as foreign busy bodies in league with the British Government and the Turkish Opposition, who were interfering intolerably in Turkish internal affairs". This well-founded statement will go to show the true trend of the nationalism of the Turks to day—a nationalism which would not brook even the faintest suspicion of any sort of interference by foreigners, even though the latter might be persons occupying the high position of His Highness the Aga Khan, and the late Rt Hon'ble Dr. Amcer Ali. What is true of the Turks, and the Arabs, and the Egyptians, is equally true of the Persians, who have never been under Ottoman rule, and who have had, therefore, a clear conception of their own separate nationhood, specially during the twentieth century, since the late Reza Shah Pahlavi was crowned their King, in 1926. The Caliphate had now disappeared for good : even the Arabic script is no longer common in the writing of the languages in all the Muslim countries, and the Arab dress had been mostly discarded and replaced

either by national, or western, costume in Persia, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan. All these lands are now conscious of a separate national existence. To speak to-day of a world-wide Islamic nationhood, of which Indian Muslims constitute an integral part, is to be guilty of gross Rip-Wan Winklism.

## V

In this connection I may refer to a speech lately delivered by that experienced statesman, and successful administrator, Sir Mirza Ismail—Dewan of Mysore for fifteen years, and now Prime Minister of the Jaipur State, in Rajpootana. Addressing a gathering of students in the latter State, he said :—“ There is one thing which I want to tell you, and it is this : Be attached to your religion, follow it with all fervour, but do not allow it to become a barrier between you and your fellow students, who profess other faiths. You may be interested to know what has happened in Turkey so far as religion is concerned. Perhaps the most interesting change which the new nationalism has brought about in Turkey has been a far-reaching transformation. Common schools, common political ideals, common economic enterprises, have brought the various religious groups together. Religion no longer dominates political and social life. Nationalism does that. In Turkey Islam is no longer the State religion, and Muslims and Christians co-operate as closely, as they do in Egypt, and in Syria. Frequently leaders in the various nationalist movements are Christians, and in nationalist processions the Cross mingles with the Crescent. Let us hope and pray that we may live to witness a similar sight in India ”. But, very unfortunately for India, it would seem that we are yet far from that great ideal, the secularisation of our political work and activities. Here even some Members of the Governor General's Executive Council do not forget, in the discharge of their public duties as officials, their religious creed, and even

blatantly emphasise it. A recent episode in the Council of State will illustrate the point. When the Hon'ble Mr P.N. Saprú criticized Mr. Jinnah's politics, in the Council of State, the Hon'ble Sir Firoz Khan Noon said : " Do not forget that I am a Muslim ". In Turkey if a Christian politician criticized a Muslim leader's political activities, the Turkish Prime Minister, or a Cabinet Minister, will never say : " Don't forget that I am a Muslim "—even were he a Muslim by faith. The Turks are nationalist first, Muslim and Christian, or anything else, afterwards. Similarly, as Sir Mirza would insist, we should be Indian first, and Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and Parsee afterwards.

Take again, the case of China, which has a large Muslim population living in the midst of a much larger number of non-Muslims. Mr. Othman Woo—the Muslim representative of the Islamic Federation of China, who toured extensively in India, in 1912—in the course of a statement issued by him at the conclusion of his tour, declared that the " over fifty million Muslims of China, did not believe in the vivisection of their country on communal or religious grounds, and that they were dying with their brethren of other faiths for the liberation of their common country, from the Japanese, without thinking of any secular gains, or loaves and fishes, for themselves ". He continued :— " In China, communal institutions did not exist ; only religious places of worship were found spread over the country for the Muslims' benefit. But nationalism was the *summum bonum* of their lives, and General Chiang Kai Shek (who was a Christian) was their only leader and guide ". In the face of these unchallengeable facts, it is warrant for the impartial reader to decide for himself whether there is warrant for the assertion, which one often hears from the undiscerning votaries of Iqbal, that the Indian Mussulmans cannot be divided according to their country of domicile, at

they are a single indivisible Muslim nation living in different parts of the world, that they do not belong to the same community, as the other Indians, but to an altogether different nation, from that of the non-Muslims. After all, are not facts stubborn things ?

## VI

I shall now briefly test this argument of the indivisibility of a " Muslim Nation ", in the light of the salient features of the Muslim period of the history of India. The rule of the Muslim Turks was established in this country towards the end of the twelfth century. The Moghul domination of Northern India did not come into existence till the reign of Akbar, in the sixteenth century. During the pre-Moghul period—which modern historians call "the Sultānate"—the central authority at Delhi grew weak, from time to time, with the result that local kingdoms came into existence in various parts of the country—in Bengal, Bihar, Jaunpore, Gujarat, Malwa, and Punjab, and elsewhere. Some of these kingdoms lasted for fairly long periods, in certain cases extending over more than a century. They remained in existence until each of them was conquered by, annexed to, and absorbed in, the Moghul Empire, during the rule of Akbar and his immediate successors. The history of the Sultānate, and the annals of these separate kingdoms—the latter mainly founded and governed by Pathan chiefs—are available to us in the annals recorded by the Indo-Muslim historians in the Persian language. Is there any reference, in any one of these histories, of even an unsuccessful attempt having been made by any of these Pathan and Turkish rulers—or any section of the Muslim population—to form at any time a political Muslim confederacy, which would have been regarded all the more essential at that time as a bulwark against the numerically immeasurably larger number of non-Muslims, large sections of which were still ruled by their own chiefs. There is no such instance forthcoming.

Tako, next, the Moghal period of Indian history. The one chief aim of all the Moghal rulers—who had the power at their command to do so—was to conquer, annex, and absorb in the Moghal Empire, the several Muslim kingdoms in South-Western India, which had flourished for centuries. Akbar was too busy in consolidating his Empire in Northern India to make such an effort seriously, though he flirted with the idea. But Jahangeer went further, and Shah Jahan further still in attempting their conquest; while Aurangzeb made it his chief object during the last three decades of his long life, and spent on their annexation the vast resources of the Empire in men and money, to so large an extent that though he ultimately succeeded in subduing them, just before his death, he left a treasury so depleted, and an Empire so helplessly organised and ill-administered that it fell to pieces soon after he had passed away, in 1707. Now Aurangzeb, we know, was an orthodox and pious Muslim, according to his lights. Did it ever occur to him that there should subsist amongst all Indian Muslim States not only a religious and social brotherhood, but also a political solidarity or, in other words, an Islamic nationhood? Surely after Sivajee had openly crowned himself a King, long before the death of Aurangzeb, nothing would have added greater political strength to the Moghal Empire than a confederacy—like the one contemplated by Iqbal—in which Aurangzeb's Empire, and also the Shia kingdoms of the South, could have joined together against the fast rising power of Sivajee and the Marathas. But here, again, the Muslim historians of the period are conspicuously silent, and do not mention even a solitary example of any such effort.

## VII

But that is not all. The history of India during the eighteenth century conclusively establishes the untenability of the proposition that there ever was, or is, any such thing

as an Islamic nationhood, or nationality. Even before the invasion of the Indo Moghal Empire by Nadir Shah, the Persian soldier of fortune, in 1739, the State had practically ceased to exist, since Asaf Jah had, in 1724—but seventeen years after the death of Aurangzeb—formally and openly declared his independence, as the ruler of by far the greater part of the Deccan; and other Muslim seekers after fortune had established themselves as practically independent rulers of Oadh, Bengal and Bihar, and some other parts of the country. Not only did they never think of establishing any such thing as a confederacy of Muslim States, even in the face of the growing menace of the Mahratta confederacy, but the greatest of the Muslim States carved out of the Indo-Moghal Empire, the Asaf Jahi kingdom of the Deccan, actually entered into alliances with the Mahrattas—and later with the British—for offensive and defensive purposes against Tipoo, the Sultan of Mysore, and son of Haider Ali, who had established himself as King in that State. Messrs. Syed Hossain Bilgrami and C. Willmott in their standard book—called *A Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions*—write on this subject as follows:—“In 1786 Tipoo Sultan demanded the cession of the province of Bijapur from the Nizam. The latter applied to the (East India) Company to render him the assistance which he considered had been stipulated for under the existing treaties; but failing to obtain it he entered into an alliance with the Mahrattas”. It was not, however, only once in a way. “In 1789 war broke out between Tipoo and the British. An offensive and defensive alliance was concluded next year between the latter and the Nizam, under the terms of which the latter prince (the Nizam) agreed to march into Tipoo's territories”. Thus on the authority of the standard history of the Hyderabad State—while the first alliance between the Nizam and the Mahrattas was to resist Tipoo's demand on the Hyderabad ruler for the cession of Bijapur, the second



alliance with the British was to enable the Nizam "to march into Tipoo's territories". These facts speak for themselves, since Tipoo and the Nizam were both Muslims.

But it did not end there : " In the year 1798 the war with Tipoo was renewed, and the Governor-General (of British India) called on His Highness (the Nizam) to join forces with the British, in accordance with the existing treaty stipulations. Great but unsuccessful efforts had been made by Tipoo to detach His Highness from his alliance with the British. When operations were commenced, the British contingent of 6,500 men, with an equal number of the Nizam's forces and many irregulars, took an active part in the siege and capture of Seringapatam (Tipoo's capital). The conquered territory (with the exception of that reserved for the re-establishment of the Hindu kingdom of Mysore) was divided between the British and the Nizam. The Peshwa, who had given no assistance in the campaign, refused the portion offered to him, and it was divided between His Highness and the British ". Surely, these statements (taken *verbatim* from what may justly be regarded as the officially-authorised history of the Hyderabad State) speak volumes in support of my contention, and need no comment to bring into relief their significance. But the facts were never in doubt ; only they, and all that they convey to the student of history, are conveniently forgotten by those who desire to bolster an untenable theory.

The facts set forth above are to be found in every standard work on the history of eighteenth century India, and are prominently mentioned by Captain Hastings Fraser in his well-known book called *Our Faithful Ally, the Nizam*. He writes :—" In 1789, Tipoo Sultan marched to invade Travancore, and though he was repulsed in his attack on the military lines of the Raja, the event was regarded as a declaration of war against the British power.

A treaty of offensive and defensive alliance was then concluded with the Nizam (July, 1790), in which it was provided that a strong detachment of the Hyderabad army was to co-operate with the (East India) Company's troops against Tipoo. The Company were to send two battalions of infantry, with the usual number of guns, to form a part of the Nizam's army". And so ends this highly significant episode in the history of eighteenth century India, which throws such a flood of light, on the matter under discussion, that even he who runs swiftly cannot fail to see its flash in the right perspective. Thus the whole trend of Islamic history, including that of Muslim India, is against the view held and so prominently stressed by Iqbal. It is, therefore, not only a reasonable presumption, but a sound conclusion, that the theory of one Islamic nationhood propounded by Iqbal has absolutely no warrant in the history of Muslim States in any part of the world, since Islam came into existence ; and the poet's view is evidently based not only on a misinterpretation, or a misconception of the Prophet's words, quoted above, but the whole course of Muslim history throughout the world.

I am glad to find myself in agreement with the views expressed on this subject by a well-known Muslim publicist of Bengal, Mr. Reazul Karim, who in the course of his book—called *Pakistan Examined*—records his opinion on the subject, under discussion, in the following terms :—  
 “ The Muslim rulers of India cut off all connections with the outside Muslim world, and even if they conquered the lands beyond the Hindukush, they brought them under the rule of Delhi. Even the question of Khalifat was not their chief concern. They owed little allegiance to the Khalifas of Islam. The Muslim rulers of India did never conceive the idea of a universal Muslim kingdom over the world. Pan-Islamism was not their rule of life. The belief that the Muslims of the world are of one nation is

only a fiction, an imaginary ideal which was never realised in practice, and will never be dooē. Muslims outside India disown us as their kith and kin, they hate us as foreigners, they neglect us because of our slavery, and if they are placed in power, they will subjugate us, and humiliate us, like foreign conquerors. Why should we then allow ourselves to be subjugated by a foreign power on the ground that that power is a Muslim power. Therefore, our position in India is just the same as it is with the Hindus of the land. We belong to India, and we are one nation with the people of the land". It is thus clear that the view of Muslim internationalism, or pan-Islamism, is not warranted either by the words of the Prophet, *ō* whom be peace, or by the factual history of India, or of the Muslim world, much less is it supported even in India by all educated Muslims.

### VIII

The fact of the matter is that as the result of his mental obsession on the subject of *kufr* (infidelity) *versus* Islam—the favourite theory of the dogmatist—Iqbal wrongly apprehended that Islam would disappear as a potent force in this world in its struggle against the rising tide of nationalism. To recall some of his own words—quoted *in extenso* in the last chapter—he deprecated the growth and expansion of liberalism in Turkey, as "the race idea, (by which compound word he meant nationality) which appears to be working in Islam with greater force than ever, may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion".

hitherto, in religions and social spheres—till the end of Time. It has as a matter of fact, never existed in the sphere of political activities of the Moslim States, and what has never yet existed is not likely to come into existence in the twentieth century, with all its surging nationalism, everywhere. Viewed in this light the whole superstructure raised by Iqbal on the problem of nationalism *versus* Moslim internationalism is entirely unsustainable on any reasoned or historical basis. In the concluding chapters of this book, where I shall sum up my views on Iqbal's position in the galaxy of philosophic poets, I may advert to the results of his misinterpretation, or misconception, due to his inherent convictions influenced by the theory of *kufr* (infidelity) *versus* Islam. But it is patent that there is absolutely no incompatibility between nationalism and religion, and that a staunch nationalist may equally be a devout follower of one's faith, as emphasised by Sir Mirza Ismail, and also by Mr. Othman Woo, in their respective statements, some short passages from which I have quoted above. That being so, Iqbal was in my opinion wrong in the view he took of the prospects of Islam going under, by the growth and expansion of nationalism on as extensive and intensive a scale. On the contrary, I believe that nationalism, both in India and in other eastern countries, will gain not only in strength and stability but also in freedom from certain prejudices—which mar its utility at present—by its association with the principles underlying Islamic brotherhood in religions and social spheres of activities.

As regards the apprehension of Iqbal for the disappearance of that "broad human outlook which Muslims have imbibed from their religion", I have shown that religion and nationalism are by no means incompatible. But while that is so, it must be a matter of great concern to cultured and thoughtful Moslims that the present attitude of the

vast bulk of their community in some less advanced countries, and nowhere more so than in India, has reduced Islam from the position of a religion for humanity into a creed for its professed believers only. This important aspect of the question has not been lost on thoughtful non-Muslims. For instance, the late Mr. C.F. Andrews, in the course of a highly sympathetic contribution (to the *New Orient* of Lahore) on "The Function of Islam in the Progress of Humanity", while justly applauding Islamic teachings, wrote as follows on the point under discussion:—"The brotherhood which Islam contemplates is always a brotherhood of believers. This relation of Muslims to fellow-believers is separated off by a sharply-cut line of demarcation from the Muslim relation to unbelievers. It is here, more than anywhere else, that I find difficulty in reconciling Islam, in its present form, with universal religion and universal brotherhood. The division of human life between Muslims and non-Muslims seems almost fundamental both in Muhammadan law and social obligation". Scarcely any European Christian was more sympathetic to other religions than was Mr. Andrews, and it is significant that the fact of the "sharply cut line of demarcation" between Muslims and non-Muslims—as now preached and practised in India—should not have failed to impress him so strikingly. This serious defect in the character of present-day Indian Islam is, in my opinion, due mainly to the influence on it of dogmatists, and to their illiberal interpretation of Quranic teachings.

---

## CHAPTER XXI

### Some Critical Estimates of Iqbal

" Great Truths are portions of the soul of man,  
Great souls are portions of Eternity ;  
For God's law since the starry song began,  
Hath been, and still forever must be.  
That every deed shall outlast Time's span,  
Must goad the soul to be erect and free ".

—James Russell Lowell (*To the Spirit of Keats*).

## II

It is stated in the Introductory chapter that most of the literature dealing with, or relating to, Iqbal is more or less uncritical, being, generally speaking, encomiastic. Fortunately, the tide seems to be turning, slowly but steadily, towards an impartial and critical estimate of Iqbal's work, both as a poet and a philosopher. Two such estimates had lately appeared, written by Indo-Muslim scholars of distinction in various spheres of learning, which are to be found in that comprehensive and informing symposium of illuminating essays written by experts—edited by the late Mr. L. S. O'Malley (of the Indian Civil Service)—called *Modern India and the West*. The writer of one of the two articles, in the Oxford University Press publication, is Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service—a distinguished scholar, and an authority on Islam and Muslim literatures; while that of the other is Sir Abdul Qadir, pre-eminent as a *litterateur*, and perhaps the ablest and most fair-minded interpreter of modern Urdu Literature—with the additional advantage of being, like Iqbal himself, a Punjabee by birth. Mr Yusuf Ali's thesis in the course of which he deals with Iqbal, is headed "Muslim Culture and Religious Thought"; while Sir Abdul Qadir's essay is concerned with the modern developments of "Urdu Literature". It would thus be seen that both

the writers—each of them highly qualified—deal with the subject discussed in this book, namely, the work and worth of Iqbal, as a poet and a philosopher, or as a "poet-philosopher". It would, therefore, be not only interesting but also instructive to compare notes with a view to find out the points of agreement or disagreement between the views of these two capable critics, and those expressed by the present writer in this book.

### III

I shall first quote the observations of Mr. Abduliah Yusuf Ali on Iqbal's general intellectual background, and his work in other spheres of activities than his own as a poet-philosopher. Writes Mr. Ali :—" The Punjab literary movement claims Sir Muhammad Iqbal as its best-known international figure. In the early days of his career he was connected with Punjab education, and his European education, (in England and Germany) makes him representative in many ways, of the interaction of eastern and western civilizations. His activities were many-sided. He took some interest in current politics, having presided over the All-India Muslim League at Allahabad, in 1930, and served a term in the old Legislative Council of the Punjab. But provincial politics afforded too narrow a field for him, and in all-India politics he was more of a philosopher than a practical statesman ".

It would be seen that Mr. Yusuf Ali's estimate does not differ substantially from that sketched out in this book. Of Iqbal as a lawyer, Mr. Yusuf Ali says nothing, presumably because the poet not having applied himself to the study and practice of law, achieved no distinction in the profession, in spite of that writer's declaration that "his (the poet's) activities were many-sided". As a public man and politician, Iqbal was--on the authority of Mr. Ali—not much of a success, as "he (the poet) was more of a philosopher than a practical statesman". Iqbal claimed, however, the credit of being the first conceiver of the idea

of Pakistan, which he suggested in the course of his presidential address at the Muslim League session held at Allahabad, in 1930. But here too one cannot be sure how far the credit should justly go to him. In his instructive, little, book (called *Enlist India for Freedom*) that well-known author and publicist, Mr. Edward Thompson, writes as follows : — " There is some dispute as to who started the notion (of Pakistan). It is often said to have been Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet. In *The Observer* I once said that he supported the Pakistan plan. Iqbal was a friend, and he set my misconception right. After speaking of his own despondency at the chaos he saw coming 'on my vast undisciplined and starving land' what magnificent English these Indians write ! he went on to say that he thought the Pakistan plan would be disastrous to the British Government, disastrous to the Hindu community, disastrous to the Muslim community. But I am the President of the Muslim League and, therefore, it is my duty to support it ". If you accept Mr. Thompson's statement and there is no cogent reason to believe to the contrary—then it is clear that the true paternity of the Pakistan proposal cannot be justly attributed to Iqbal. On the whole, one is justified in concluding that the life of Iqbal—like that of many other poets—was " uneventful " and may justly be characterised as such. And this is exactly the view suggested by me in this work.

#### IV

Having dealt with the non-poetical life of Iqbal, Mr. Yusuf Ali then adverts to his work as a poet, in the following terms : " His genius lay in the direction of developing a mystical interpretation of Islam as the final form, both for the development of Human personality, and for the working out of a great and eternal State co-extensive with the whole of humanity. He wholly approves of the spirit of the second Khalifa, Umar, the first critical and independent



mind in Islam, who at the last moment of the Prophet had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: "The Book of God is sufficient for us". This implies that Iqbal would prefer an independent and progressive interpretation of the Quran itself to the many glosses put upon it by medieval commentators. It does not imply that he would go to the lessons of European experience except as a warning". It is in the above passages that Mr. Ali sums up—according to his lights—the poetic and philosophic work of Iqbal, and, here again, his estimate does not differ materially from that presented in this book—though it does in many details.

Having referred in the passage quoted above "to the lessons of European experience except as a warning", Mr. Ynsaf Ali naturally deals with Iqbal's views on western civilisation, which have been discussed at some length in this book, but which are likely to be illuminated by comparison with Mr. Ali's exposition of the subject. I make no apology, therefore, for quoting the passages in which the writer summarises his views on the poet's estimate of western civilisation and culture, which it will be seen is entirely in accord with the exposition offered in this book. "To him (the poet) European civilisation was"—writes Mr. Ali—"bad, fraudulent, chaotic, unjust, and greedy. For comments on European civilization, he would go to such writers (as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spengler, or Karl Marx), who take a pessimistic view of it. He looks upon political and economic stability, peace, and justice as essential elements in religion, but he thinks that Europe has deserted them. His criticism of European civilization is expressed in many scathing lines and passages in his poetry both Persian and Urdu. The boasted power of the West is nothing but Imperialism to oppress the weak, and the League of Nations is a mere society of robbers to parcel out the graves of those they have killed. The western

freedom of women is not real freedom. Woman's true sphere is in a secluded life of love and family. Modern civilisation is a godless civilisation and can lead to nothing but self-destruction". This is exactly what has already been stated in this book. Having discussed the important aspects of Iqbal's work as a poet-philosopher, Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali expresses, at the end of his essay his considered opinion on the poet's legacy to those for whom he thought, planned, and wrote, during his long career. I shall quote this passage as a valuable and illuminating contribution to the correct appraisal of the work and worth of Iqbal :—

" Though Iqbal's literary genius and his philosophic interpretation of Islam brought him immense popularity, he was yet an isolated figure. He founded no school of literary thought, as his principal works were written not in Urdu but in Persian. In public affairs, and in building up the ' new Temple ' (*noya shikalo*, to use his own words, his influence was negligible. To the conservatives he appeared as a man speaking a new language, and he trod on some of their cherished convictions. To the advanced school with a nationalistic tinge, his attacks on the West seemed to furnish an argument for their patriotism. But in other matters they remained cold. If there is an advanced school of any other tinge, it is silent in literature, and daily life ". This is the impartial verdict of a distinguished Indo-Muslim scholar and critic. It epitomises in felicitous language the text which is the thesis of this book.

## V

Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali—writing as he did on " Muslim Culture and Religious Thought ", had dealt with Iqbal at some length. Sir Abdul Qadir discussing as he did the development of Urdu Literature in the twentieth century, had naturally confined himself to Iqbal's work in that language only. This is how he expresses his view of Iqbal :—" The contact of the East and the West found its

most remarkable expression in the writings of the eminent poet-philosopher, Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who combined oriental scholarship, of a high order, with a profound knowledge of the literature and philosophy of the West. He occupies a unique position in Urdu poetry. He wrote a number of excellent poems in Persian as well, but "any reference to the merits of his Persian poems would be out of place here, as we are dealing with Urdu literature". He then continues:—"We can form a fair idea of the trend of his thought from his Urdu works. The principal theme dealt with by him are:—(a) the importance of the 'individual' and the need of developing the great potentialities of the 'Ego' or the 'Self' in man, (b) the high position of man in the scheme of the universe, and the unlimited possibilities of his further rise to perfection, (c) the necessity of the guidance of the spirit to control man's material progress, which threatens disaster if left uncontrolled, (d) a warning to the nations of the West of the disastrous consequences which will ensue if they continue to advance on purely materialistic lines, and (e) a warning to the nations of the East, in general, and to Muslims, in particular, to remember their spiritual eminence". There was thus not much that was new or original in the topics handled by Iqbal; as most of them are dealt with in the *Masnawi* of the famous mystic poet, Rumi.

These then are Iqbal's philosophic conceptions as expressed in his poems. Sir Abdur Quadir's general comment on Iqbal's philosophy is as follows:—"His philosophy was coloured by his study of Nietzsche and Bergson, but at heart he remained a mystic, with ideas attuned to those of the Persian sufis, and his dominant note is abhorrence of the materialism of the West." The question is: Was Iqbal at heart a mystic of the type of the Persian Sufis? His "abhorrence" of what he regarded as "the materi-

alism of the west ", is certainly but too patent to all unprejudiced critics of his works, whether in Urdu or Persian. But those who have read, in the previous pages of this book, the vehement denunciation by Iqbal of mysticism or sufism, will hesitate to accept Sir Abdul Qadir's view as absolutely correct. That apart, there can be no two opinions that the estimates formed of Iqbal's work, and his literary legacy to the Urdu-knowing section of the Indian population, by these two eminent and scholarly critics, are, on the whole, reasonable and acceptable, and they agree, in the main, with the statements made, and the conclusions drawn, in this book—namely, that (in the words of Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali) Iqbal remained, in spite of his popularity, " an isolated figure ", who " founded no school of literary thought ", and whose " influence was negligible ". It would not be easy to set aside such well-informed and impartial verdicts, as those quoted above, by indulging in cheap claptrap, or in high-sounding pomposities, as is often done by some if not many of the indiscriminating admirers of Iqbal, and of which I may quote the latest example available : — " His deep and thoughtful writings have exercised a tremendous and remarkable influence on the trend of modern poetry. He was the originator and creator of a new angle of poetic vision and thought. He looked at life and nature from a new impression and imagination, and opened a new vista of creative thinking. His poetry has a great force and power of creating upheavals and revolutions in the realm of the ideas and actions. Whoever comes under its enchantment is spell bound. His poetry is replete with such ideas and spirit that it has the power to awaken the nations from dreams and slumbers ; to arouse their latent faculties, and shake the foundations of the edifice of society and Government. In short, his poetry is unique of its kind —original, forceful, and perfect". I shall not venture to offer any comments on it ; nor is it at all necessary to attempt it for the benefit of the readers of this book.

capacity. While commending this highly useful and informing book to students of the subject, I shall make a few extracts from it on some of the points discussed by me in this *critique*.

Mr. Smith begins his study of Iqbal with the expression of the scientific view that if Islam is to "function in this radically new world in which we find ourselves, it must be refashioned to give dynamic initiative and vision to man facing a life of opportunity, and to give him creative love towards the community of his fellow-men". Starting with these unimpeachable premises—which may be said to be the groundwork of this book also—the writer proceeds to express his views on Iqbal and his work as follows:— "He was a poet, not a systematic thinker; and he did not hesitate to contradict himself". This is exactly what I have ventured to suggest in dealing with the philosophic views of Iqbal, in the light of the exposition of the subject by Professor Shareef. Then writes the author:—"We ourselves, in the treatment of Iqbal, have not made any undue effort to unify the contradictions of his prolific utterances", "because to integrate his divergencies would be misleading". He then stresses his view by declaring that "in Iqbal's un-co-ordinated effusions, one can find whatever one wills—except static contentment". After making these general observations, he addresses himself to particular points, and asks: "What was Iqbal's ethics"? He answers by asserting that: "there is no clear and exact answer; he elaborated no ethical system. Clearly one must do something, and vigorously. But what? It was not Iqbal's function to say precisely what". Having expressed his opinion on Iqbal as an ethicist, he proceeds to deal with the poet in other capacities, and states:—"He was not an economist, a sociologist, a politician, nor, as we have said, an ethicist. It would be gratuitous to criticise Iqbal's lack of ethical clarity as a defect; but it

must be kept in mind as a deficiency by those who think that they ' follow ' him, lest they be misled ". Mr. Smith then discusses Iqbal's views as a socialist—a topic, on which, from his own affiliations with it, he is fully qualified to write. After discussing this subject, at some length, and referring to Iqbal's writings on it, he sums up his verdict on the position of Iqbal as a socialist, by stating that " the basic fact is that he never knew what socialism is ". He continues :—" He supposed socialism to be like the other western system, capitalism, in this point of being materialist ; and felt what it lacked was religion—that is Islam. Towards the end of his life some of his friends were able to convince him that he really did not understand socialism, and he was preparing to remedy this ignorance when he died. However, Iqbal never got further than thinking of religion and socialism as supplementary to each other. At best he thought of them as two distinct things, of which a good society should have both. He was never able (despite his theoretical disparagement of dualism) to integrate the two"; never able to see the moral and religious implications of socialism or the correct sociological implications, to-day, of a vital religion ". This may seem to Iqbal's admirers rather a harsh verdict, since they make much of his socialistic views. But I think it would be endorsed by any impartial critic — who appreciates Iqbal's poems tinged with socialistic ideas, and carefully compares them with the implications of socialism, as understood in the West — if only he would apply his mind, unprejudiced from prepossessions, to the numerous cogent reasons given by Mr. Smith in support of his view.

Next, Mr Smith deals with Iqbal's attitude towards social reform and progress, a subject which is discussed by me, at some length, in this book. He expresses his views in terms, which are in complete agreement with those in which I have expressed my own

estimate of Iqbal's works in the field of social reform activities. Mr. Smith writes as follows :—" In spite of all that he said, he actually condemned people who prepared to do anything religiously radical. In fact, he wished that the Government would suppress them." " I very much appreciate the orthodox Hindus' demands for protection against religious reformers in the new constitution. Indeed, this demand ought to have been first made by the Muslims ". Mr Smith quotes this from a statement made by the poet, and then continues :—" He called for governmental intervention even against the Ahmadiyah sect, whose heresy is theoretical. And, despite his evolutionary philosophy, he attached great importance to a static insistence on the finality of Islam—as a social system, never to be superseded and, in practice, never to be even improved. Consequently, he can be found upholding the *shari'ah*, and condemning the moderns who would not practise it in full ; he would win them back to the orthodoxy of the *sunnah*. The first stage in the process of self development, he said, is obedience, and he took this to mean obedience to the traditional code of Islam ". In support of his view, Mr. Smith cites the lines, quoted below, from Iqbal's *Israr-i-Khudi* :—

Whoso would master the sun and stars  
 Let him make himself a prisoner of Law !  
 The star moves towards its goal  
 With head bowed in surrender to a law ;  
 O thou that art emancipated from the old custom,  
 Adorn the feet once more with the same fine silver  
 chain !

Do not complain of the hardness of the Law.

Mr. Smith then turns to what he regards as Iqbal's " communalism ". On this subject he explicitly states that " one could cite point after point in which he was, in fact, communal ; and certainly he has been exploited most loudly and most successfully by the communalists". The

process of reasoning, and the data on which it is based, should be read by the reader in Mr. Smith's book. After discussing the subject, the writer declares his conviction as follows : — " And thus has the noblest of visionaries of tomorrow's just and world-wide brotherhood been turned by it into the champion of the most retrograde and hate-disseminating sectionalists ". This, again, may seem to Iqbal's indiscriminating admirers a severe indictment of the poet, but they have to realise that now that the critical age has evidently dawned on the domain of Urdu literature it is time that they prepared themselves to re-study Iqbal in the light of criticisms offered by qualified and competent critics, rather than continue to live in a dream-land of their own. Mr. Smith then addresses himself to what he regards as another, and perhaps the most serious deficiency of Iqbal's, on which he writes : — " There remains yet one damning aspect of Iqbal. Even at his most poetic, his most progressive, his most inclusively Utopian, he never wished that the new values should apply to more than half the human race. He never understood, and he constantly fought against, those who deem that women too might share in the brave new world. He imagined European women heartless, hating maternity, 'love, and life'; he wanted to keep women 'pure', and in subjection. For women he wanted no activism, no freedom, no vicegerency of God. The glory of struggle, and of self contained individuality, is apparently for man alone. Woman should remain as she has always been in Islam, confined, acquiescent to man, and achieving nothing in herself but only through others. She should remain a means to an end. Iqbal untiringly preached to the world his conception of the ideal woman : —

The chaste Fatimah is the harvest of the field  
of submission,

The chaste Fatimah is a perfect model for mother ;  
So touched was her heart for the poor,



That she sold her own wrap to a Jew.  
 She, who might command the spirits of heaven and hell,  
 Merged her own will in the will of her husband.  
 Her upbringing was in courtesy and forbearance ;  
 And, murmuring the Qur'an, she ground corn ".

Mr. Smith thus comments :—" And yet Iqbal, towards the end, must have recognised that he was wrong about women. There is a hint of this in his small poem, *Aurat* (" Woman " ) ; for the first time, he is raising the question, though he knows that he himself has no answer. The poem concludes :

I too at the oppression of women am most sorrowful ;  
 But the problem is intricate, no solution do I find  
 possible.

Lest Mr. Smith's estimate of Iqbal appear to be unjust to the poet, I quote below some passages from his book, which would go to show that he also praised Iqbal where he thought praise was justly due to him. Writes Mr. Smith :—" The greatest service rendered by Iqbal was his reiterated call to action in the name of Islam, his raising of action to be a virtue in itself, his bold insistence that a dynamic infidel is more righteous than a passive Muslim. Thus Iqbal has come a long way from the accepted Islamic moral attitude. In his view, the goal of humanity is not submission but supremacy. The chief end of man is to be the vicegerent of God on Earth. Iqbal's influence has been remarkably varied and widespread. Almost every one found something in him to applaud, something which stirred him to renewed Islamic vigour. There were those, of the liberal school, who read Iqbal, and were merely proud of him—were proud that modern Islam had produced so great a man. Others, however, were incited by Iqbal's message to some degree of activity in the name of their Lord. They could not but see that the world about, or within, them was less good than it might be ; and the

poet's eloquence stirred them to do something about it — and to co ordinate their doing it, more or less precisely with their Islam. Islam as a religion has produced so far no intellectual modernization of its idea of righteousness more explicit than Iqbal's. He is great because he said with supreme eloquence, and convincing passion, what his fellows were beginning to feel, but were unable to formulate. Any modern Muslim who would talk about religion must begin where Iqbal left off; otherwise he is not worth listening to." There are many other appreciative comments in the book, indicating Mr. Smith's impartial attitude towards Iqbal as a thinker, and a moral force in Indian Islam.

## VII

It was not unexpected that Mr. Smith's critical survey of Iqbal's message or teachings would go unchallenged, or uncontested, by the poet's admirers. And I am not surprised to find that Mr. Bashir Ahmad Dar devotes (in his *Study in Iqbal's Philosophy*) no less than 25 in a book of about 400 pages—that is nearly one-eighth of the space available—to a bitter attack on Mr. Smith and his book. Mr. Smith—judging from his book—is a scholar of no mean order and will be able to defend himself against the attack made on him by Mr. Dar. It is not my intention, therefore, nor am I called upon, to intervene in the controversy. But I shall content myself by quoting some passages from Mr. Dar's pages to show his controversial methods. As stray extracts—detached from the context—are likely to be misleading, the student will do well to study Mr. Dar's attack on Prof. Smith, as a whole. Keeping this in mind, I quote below some passages from Mr. Dar's book:—"His (Mr. Smith's) sympathy with Islam is superficial, selfish, patronising; while his hatred for it is deep-rooted, conscious, and apparent. He employs all the propagandist tactics. His knowledge of Islam, as a religion, seems to

be poor to an unbearable degree." After quoting a passage from Mr. Smith's book, Mr. Dar proceeds :—" This passage speaks eloquently not only of his ignorance about Islam, but also of a great confusion of thought." Further :—" Mr. Smith does not seem to be clear in his mind about the true function of religion in our life, and therefore a great confusion of thought runs throughout his criticism of Iqbal. His criticism of Iqbal's view about immortality that ' he tries to reverse the old function of this idea as an opiate, and to transform even it into yet another call for struggle ' is equally misleading. The real reason of Mr. Smith's criticism is that his ideas about religion are derived either from his study of Christianity, or from the prejudiced accounts of Islam at the hands of missionaries. Mr. Smith seems to show his ignorance of the early history of Islam ". Mr. Smith's " dogmatic assertions are not worth any lengthy comment, and show the author's lack of balanced judgment." And yet no less than 25 pages cover Mr. Dar's " comment " on Prof. Smith's book ! Evidently, even a hundred pages would have been insufficient for " lengthy comment." Later :—" The real reason why Mr. Smith misunderstands the whole situation is that he is only aware of Christianity as a typical religion and not Islam. Mr. Smith shows a great confusion of thought. Though he often mocks at Iqbal for his lack of sociological insight, and thus indirectly asserting his own knowledge of that science, yet Mr. Smith's criticism of Iqbal merely because he advocated the importance of conservatism as well as change in the reconstruction of society, speaks eloquently of his ignorance. Mr. Smith seems to identify religion with mere humanitarian work of one sort or other, and refuses to see its value for society beyond that. As usual, Mr. Smith's point is quite wide of the mark. His ignorance of the true nature and function of religion led him to one mis-statement after another."

These are but a few samples of Mr. Dar's criticism of Mr. Smith's estimate of Iqbal as a thinker, and will convey a fair idea of his controversial methods. Their significance lies in establishing the contention that, as a rule, the admirers of the poet are hyper-sensitive, and are highly intolerant of any criticism - be it ever so reasonable - on Iqbal's poetry, or the thought underlying it, a fact of which several incontrovertible instances are to be found in this volume.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### Iqbal's Position as a Poet-Philosopher.

شیخ کعبہ ہو کے پہنچا ہم گشتِ دل میں ہو  
درد منزل ایک تھی تک راہ ہی کا بہید تھا

"The Shaikh arrived at his destination by the route of Kaaba, while I arrived at the same place by the route of the temple of the heart. O' Dard (says the poet addressing himself) the goal of both of us was the same, and the difference lay only in the routes taken by each of us".

—Dard (an eighteenth century Urdu poet).

"Many road Thou hast fashioned : all of them lead to the Light".

—Rudyard Kipling's (*Hymn to Mithras*, in his *Puck of Pook's Hill*).

"Freedom is recreated year by year,  
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,  
In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,  
In minds that sway the future like a tide.  
No broadest creeds can hold, and no codes ;  
She chooses men for her august abodes,  
Building them fair and fronting to the dawn ;  
Yet, when we seek her, we but find a few  
Light footprints, leading morn-ward through the dew ;  
Before the day had risen, she was gone."

—James Russell Lowell.

## II

And now that I am nearing the end of this survey, the question naturally arises as to the position of Iqbal in the galaxy of the world's poets. I have compared Iqbal's works with those of some admittedly great poets, in an earlier chapter, but I shall try to analyse the position here, in a few words. Iqbal never attempted dramatic poetry; hence it is not necessary to compare him with any dramatist, and so a

comparison with a dramatic poet would be unfair to him. Nor did he try his hand at an epic or a heroic poem; hence it is not necessary to institute comparison between him and the famous European epic poets (like Homer, Virgil, Dante or Milton), on the one hand, or the Asiatic poets (like Valmiki or Firdausi; on the other. Nor is Iqbal's poetry lyrical. As Mr. K. G. Saiyidain writes, (in his *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*) :—" Iqbal is not just a lyrical poet transforming into beautiful verse his wayward whims and fleeting emotions. He is primarily a thinker and philosopher in the best sense of the word ". That being so, there arises no question of any comparison between him and such great master lyrists, as Hafiz or Shelley. Iqbal's poetry, as that of "a thinker and philosopher ", is mainly didactic, and didactic poetry has long been at a discount—unless it be of the very highest order—for few persons of taste now like to be preached at in verse, it being bad enough, in all conscience, in prose.

In the range of English literature—with which foreign literature we in India are naturally familiar—we know that with the solitary exception of Wordsworth, the other purely didactic poets are now forgotten and neglected. Does Iqbal compare, as a didactic poet, favourably with Wordsworth? Who that has read both Wordsworth and Iqbal can say so? Wordsworth is generally well-nigh transcendental—catholic, idealistic, and the expounder of the realisation of beatific beatitude: while Iqbal is generally creedistic and dogmatic, and the spokesman of the muscular philosophy of the superman. The eminent Latin poet, Lucretius—perhaps the world's greatest didactic poet—expounded in his famous poem called *De Natura Rerum* (" On the Nature of Things ") the theory of atomism, which was regarded for centuries as a philosophy of world-peace. Is Iqbal's philosophy, as expressed in his poems, conducive to peace and goodwill—as all great poetry should be—or is it not, on the contrary, as declared by quasi-

fied critics, unduly assertive, unnecessarily polemical, and, above all, propagandist ? Readers of this book may decide for themselves, after a careful perusal of the materials brought together in it. Yet another great English philosophic poet, with whom a comparison may be instituted with Iqbal, is Browning. In one of the Iqbal Day Lectures (printed in *Aspects of Iqbal* Professor Gurbachan Singh writes on this point as follows : " Browning's poetic method is of course different from Iqbal's. The dramatic monologue (of Browning's) is a purely artistic form, free from any overt attempt at didacticism, which so often has a deadening effect on poetry. Didacticism no doubt is present in Browning, but in the most powerful pieces it is controlled by the lyrical impulse, and appears only in an artistic and subdued form. Iqbal's method is openly didactic, and the reader is aware in most lines of being spoken to "—which is but another name, in common parlance, for propagandism. This declaration from an avowed admirer of Iqbal's speaks volumes in support of the contention that Iqbal's poems—whatever be their value to the people who would rather like to be preached at than be regaled by poetic or symphonic harmony—do not generally possess that heart-touching and emotion-rousing quality which is so characteristic of all great and inspiring poetry.

Had Iqbal cared to express his philosophic views in Urdu prose instead of poetry—a proposition which would sound like heresy to his votaries—he might have possibly achieved a higher position in circles of thoughtful readers, though he might have lost his popularity in the circle of his admirers. In this connection the following remarks of Dr. M.D. Taseer (in his Introduction to *Aspects of Iqbal*) are relevant and instructive :—" Undoubtedly the best exposition of his own philosophy of life was written by himself, in English, under the title of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Referring to the idea of this book (originally delivered as lectures at Madras), in a

letter written to Professor Tabassum (on 20th September, 1925, he (Iqbal) stated that he would like to call it 'Islam as I understand it'. "I have discussed in this book appreciatively in an earlier chapter, and pointed out that (as stated by Iqbal himself) its chief value is subjective rather than objective. I agree that it is the best of Iqbal's works, but Mr. F.K. Khan Durrani (in the same book, *Aspects of Islam*) remarks about it that "his Madras Lectures, so eagerly awaited before they were published, have gone unread". This statement is perfectly correct. Compared with those in Northern India, who possess any familiarity with the poems of Iqbal—especially those which he composed in Urdu—the number of persons who have read his English work, in question, is infinitesimally small. In fact, it is practically unknown even amongst the votaries of Iqbal—except perhaps in a small circle in Hyderabad. This has been one of the effects of the popularity of his poetry amongst the ranks of those who prefer to be preached at in Urdu verse rather than in English prose;

### III

So much for Iqbal's poetry; but what about his philosophy? There is no doubt that whatever his position, in my opinion, in the galaxy of philosophic poets, Iqbal is regarded by his admirers as one of the greatest amongst them, if not the greatest, and should, therefore, be treated as such. Of his philosophy much has been said in an earlier chapter, especially in my *resume* of Professor Sharif's articles on the subject, and I have also expressed my views at various places in this book. But I feel that I should place before the reader the opinion of an eminent man of letters as Mr. E. M. Forster—a distinguished *litterateur* as critic, essayist, and novelist—who (in the course of a review of Dr. Nicholson's English translation of Iqbal's *Asrar-e-Bekhudi* contributed by him to the then leading literary-critical journal of London, the *Athenaeum*, dated the 10th



December, 1920) expressed his views which, in some respects, constitute an illuminating exposition of Iqbal as a philosophic poet. I, therefore, make no apology for reproducing some long passages from it, which are as follows :—

" *The Secrets of the Self* is addressed to Muslims only, is philosophic, separatist ; on its literary side it depends from classical Persia ; and though there are non-Muslim elements in it they do not come from Hindnism ; no, from a very different quarter. Iqbal has been influenced by Nietzsche ; he tries to find, in that rather shaky ideal of the Superman, a guide through the intricacy of conduct. His couplets urge us to be hard and live dangerously ; we are to be stone, not glass ; diamonds, not dewdrops ; tigers, not sheep ; we are to beware of those sheep who, fearing our claws, come forward with the doctrine of vegetarianism. In an amusing fable he sets forth the consequences. As a guide to conduct Nietzsche is at a discount in Europe. The drawback of being a Superman is that your neighbours observe your efforts, and try to be Superman too, as Germany now realizes. But the significance of Iqbal's is not that he holds it, but that he manages to connect it with the Quran. Two modifications, and only two, have to be made ; he condemns the Nietzsche who is an aristocrat, and an atheist ; his Superman is permitted to spring from any class of society, and is obliged to believe in God. No further difficulty offers. There is a text in the Quran which says : ' Lo, I will appoint a vice-regent upon earth ', and another text relating that the vice regency was offered to man after the angels refused it. Legalists quote these texts in support of the Califate ; Iqbal in support of his Superman. It is our duty to imitate the divine attributes, and to pass through obedience and self-control the vice-regency. As Iqbal puts it :—

God's vice-regent is as the soul of the universe,  
His being is the shadow of the greatest Name.  
He knows the mysteries of part and whole,  
He executes the command of Allah in the world".

"But likeness to God"—continues Mr. Forster—"does not mean union with Him. On the contrary, the Hindus are wrong; so are the Sufis, so even is Iqbal's own master, the great poet Jalal-ud-deen Rumi. The nearer the Superman approaches God the fuller grows his own individuality. The desire to merge, to renounce the Self, is a sign of decay, and the doctrine has been evolved by subject races as an anodyne. It may be remarked, in passing, that Iqbal by no means turns the pantheistic position; he says that the Self ought not to seek union with God, but he is not clear as to whether it might succeed if it did try; the spectre of Hinduism still haunts him. But this is a side issue. What is so interesting is the connection that he has effected between Nietzsche and the Quran. It is not an arbitrary or fantastic connection; make Nietzsche believe in God, and a bridge can be thrown. Most Indians when they turn to the philosophy of the West, do not know what will be useful to them. Iqbal has a surer eye. In another poem, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, Iqbal treats of Islam as an ideal society, a catholic church, in which the believer can lose himself, and touch a life greater than his own. How is the Superman to fit in here? It will be interesting to see, and perhaps Mr. Nicholson (the translator of Iqbal's *Secrets of the Self*) will give us a translation of *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, which is likewise in Persian. As Iqbal himself sings:—

My song is another world than theirs;  
This bell calls other travellers to take the road."

So wrote Mr. Forster. What is the sum and substance of his exposition of Iqbal's philosophic poetry, as revealed by the poet in his principal philosophic work, *Asrar-e-Khudi*?

Is it not, (a) that Iqbal had been influenced by Nietzsche, but the poet had adopted the German philosopher's teachings to his requirements by fancying that the Superman might be a commoner and not an aristocrat, and also a theist and not an atheist; (b) that in aspiring to seek the union of the soul with the Divine not only are the Hindus and the Sufies in the wrong, but "even Iqbal's own master, the great poet Jalal-ud-deen Rumi;" (c) that though Iqbal is not a pantheist, and holds "that the self ought not to seek union with God", he is not clear as to whether "it might succeed if it did try", as "the spectre of Hinduism still haunts him", and (d) that he has affected a connection "between Nietzsche and the Quran" by making the German philosopher "believe in God", and thus throw a bridge between the doctrine of supermanism, as inculcated by Nietzsche, and Islam, as interpreted by Iqbal. If this is the import of the commentary by Mr. Forster on Iqbal's philosophic poetry, he does not seem to be wrong in the view he has taken, since a sympathetic interpreter—Mr. K.G. Saiyidain in his book, mentioned above—*Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*—writes that "his (Iqbal's) qualified admiration for Nietzsche—with whose ideal he has certain superficial similarities which have misled many students of his thought—is based on the German philosopher's search for a better type of manhood, the Superman". If Iqbal deliberately adapted to his philosophic requirements, "the German philosopher's search for a better type of manhood, the Superman", which is the keynote of Nietzsche's philosophy, one should scarcely find fault—as Mr. Saiyidain does—with students of Iqbal's works for thinking that he was materially influenced by the German philosopher, as suggested by Mr. Forster; and there seems no justification for holding that they are misled by "certain superficial similarities". The supermanian theory is the crux of the philosophy of both of them, and it cannot be brushed away as a "superficial similarity".

## IV

The chief difficulty with Iqbal seems to be his peculiar mentality, due to the tremendous influence exerted over him by the theories he evolved under the stress of his conception of Nietzsche's philosophy adapted to his philosophic requirements, and his interpretation of Islam, so as to bring in reconciliation between them. A famous story, called *Udana*, recorded in the Buddhist scripture, which is about two thousand and five hundred years old, is relevant to the discussion, and I may quote it profitably. A Raja (worried with never-ending philosophical discussions) asked his attendant to gather all the blind men in the city, which the latter did. The Raja then said to him: "show them an elephant". He did so, saying to them: "this is an elephant". And to one blind man's touch he presented the head of the elephant, to another's the ear, to others' touch the tusk, the trunk, the foot, the back, and the tail, respectively, saying to each one that that was the elephant. Thereupon, the Raja went up to them and asked each: "Have you studied the elephant?" "Yes, your Majesty". "Then tell me your conclusions about him". Thereupon he who had been presented with the head answered: "Your Majesty, an elephant is just like a pot". And he who had only touched the ear replied: "an elephant is just like a winnowing-basket". He who had been presented with the tusk said it was like a ploughshare. He who knew only

Much of the trouble in this world is due to many of us emphasising one's own experience of "only one side of a thing". Such also was, I fear, the case with Iqbal, who in spite of his great intellectuality, saw, generally speaking, "only one side of a thing", and not its other sides. He does not seem to have realised that the various systems of philosophy and religion present to humanity but one or other of the facets of the many-sidedness of the Divine, and while more appreciative of any facet that may appeal to one particularly, one should try to understand the others also, which it is of no less importance to do to be able to have a perfect conception of the universality of the spirit of God. If a diamond, seen through its various facets, presents different degrees of sparkling radiance and everchanging iridescence, how essential it absolutely is to keep in view the numerous facets of this Universe to be able to realise fully the workings of the Divine. But in his over-anxiety to preach, through his poems, his philosophy—which he thought was "a song of another world", quite different from the philosophies of other poets, since his *bang* or "bell" called other travellers to take the road—Iqbal limited his philosophic vision to but one side of the road, and could not extend its sweep to the central spot from which the road he wished the travellers to take branched off along with several other roads—all equally important, and equally adapted to the requirements of travellers to the destined goal for the uplift and perfection of humanity. His philosophical outlook is, therefore, marked by a serious defect, and to the extent that that outlook is reflected in his poems, it vitiates them as well—as would be any system of thought, or any poetical composition, which overlooks the maxim embodied in Khwaja Dard's couplet placed at the head of this chapter, that whether the Shaikh takes the route via the Kaaba (that is as taught in Islam) or through the temple of the heart (that is through some other medium)

the ultimate destination for all human beings is one and the same—though the routes may lie differently. This sound maxim of Dard no poet or philosopher can ignore but at his own peril. Iqbal had certainly ignored it, and hence the great divergence in interpreting him between his votaries and his critics—the latter differing widely from the former on Iqbal's merits as a poet-philosopher.

## V

I have now discussed, according to my lights, the works of Iqbal both as poet and philosopher. But Mr. K. G. Saiyidain—a scholar of distinction—asserts that Iqbal was also a great educationist, and he has written a book to prove his assertion, called *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, to which I have already referred. But with all his cothusiasm for Iqbal as an educationist he admits frankly that the poet was not an educationist "in the limited everyday-meaning of the word, and had not been engaged—except for a comparatively brief period—in teaching. Nor has he put forward anywhere, in a consistent and closely-knit argnment, any comprehensive educational theory". Such admissions would put the party making them out of court in a suit for a declaratory decree to the effect that Iqbal was an edncationist, and entitled to be treated as such. But as we are not in the domain of law but in that of philosophy, it may be urged by Mr. Saiyidain that the question stands on a different footing, as (according to him) "education in its correct signification, must be visualised as the sum total of all the cultural forces which play on the life of a person or a community". It is evident that viewing from the standpoint of such a "correct signification" Mr. Saiyidain regards Iqbal as an educationist, and tries to glean from his works his educational ideas on the ground that "the emergence of an outstanding creative thinker, who has a distinct message to impart, and new values to present before the world, is a phenomenon of

the greatest interest for the educationist ". Now if this be accepted as a correct criterion by any educationist, he will be driven to comb out educational principles from the fragmentary pieces in the works of almost any poet-philosopher, who may be regarded as one of the " out-standing creative thinkers ", with a " distinct message to impart, and new values to present " to humanity. But I have not come across any such work in English, even in regard to the educational theories that might have been deducible from the poems of such outstanding poet-philosophers as Wordsworth, Browning, or any other of the same standard.

Mr. K. G. Saiyidain's *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, according to the scheme of its author, deals also with many of the philosophic theories or doctrines of Iqbal. They have already been touched upon in this book, and it would serve no useful purpose to traverse the same ground again. To illustrate, however, the author's method of treatment, I may refer to but one particular point—the spirit of tolerance in Iqbal's work—which I have had to advert to more than once, in the course of the discussions on this subject. Writes Mr. Saiyidain :—" The second quality which Iqbal considers to be an essential constituent of good character is tolerance. Iqbal has often been maligned by ill-informed critics for his supposed intolerance and fanaticism, and therefore the advocacy of this quality by him may seem surprising ". I suspect that " ill-informed critics " of any one have less to answer for acerbity and bitterness in this world than the so-called well-informed but uncritical admirers, who perpetually sing hallelujahs to many of the undeserving. But the " ill-informed critics "—who are charged with having " maligned " Iqbal—need not feel surprised, unless they are told what was Iqbal's conception of tolerance ; for just as meat for one man is poison for another, so what seems tolerance to one may appear intolerance to another. To Mr. Saiyidain

Iqbal's conception of tolerance might be just the ideal thing, but to others it might give a wholly different impression. In support of his contention the author of *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy* appends to his observations four Urdu couplets from *Bal-i-Jibrail*, and also a poem in Persian, without English translation of either. The English rendering of the Urdu couplets is as follows :—

The dervish intoxicated with the love of God is neither  
of the East nor of the West,  
My home is neither Delhi, nor Isfahan, nor Samarqand.  
I utter only those words which I consider to be true,  
I am neither a blind follower in the mosque, nor a  
creature of the present-day civilization.  
My own people are angry with me, and the strangers are  
also displeased,  
(Because) I could never say that a deadly poison was  
sugarcandy.  
It is difficult for a right-seeing and a right-thinking man,  
To call a heap of dust, the Nehamawand mountain.

Now as I understand the above couplets, according to my lights, they have nothing whatsoever to do with tolerance in any shape or form. Iqbal asserts in them his unconcern at the place of his birth (presumably meaning thereby his nationality), and then his right to independence of judgment, his indifference alike to the opinion of friends and strangers, and his determination to give expression to his convictions, in scorn of consequence. That is all that can be deduced from the above lines, and not any doctrine of tolerance ; and as such these couplets do not support the author's contention. The Persian poem, translated into English, would read as follows :—

Religion consists in burning from head to foot in  
search of Truth,  
Its end is love, and its beginning is propriety of  
conduct, or discipline.  
It is a fault to bring a bad word on the lips,



The 'infidel' and the 'faithful' are all creatures of God.

Humanity means honouring men,

Be aware of the lofty position of man !

A devotee of love takes guidance from God,

He becomes affectionate towards the 'infidel' and the 'faithful'.

He takes in the breadth of his soul both 'infidelity' and 'faith',

If the soul seeks refuge from another soul, Woe be to that soul !

Although the soul is the prisoner in water and earth (human body),

Yet all this universe is the universe of the soul.

The above poem may be said to contain Iqbal's views on the subject of tolerance, since we find in it the statement that "the 'infidel' and the 'faithful' are all creatures of God", and that a devotee of love becomes affectionate towards the 'infidel' and the 'faithful', and "takes in the breadth of his soul both infidelity and faith". So far so good. But is there anything so striking in them as to justify Mr. Saiyidian in exclaiming, as he does : "What an inspiring gospel of tolerance do these lines preach". Is not the same view (that the Muslim and the non-Muslim are equal before the Lord) repeatedly inculcated in the Quran ? Was it not precisely this very view which was enunciated by the Hindu Raja, practically in these very words, in his letter of protest to the Emperor Aurangzeb—which is quoted in an earlier chapter—and was not the same thought expressed in beautiful language by several Muslim poets of India in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, from whose writings I have adopted mottoes to some of the chapters of this book ? Iqbal's declaration on this subject is, therefore, only as inspiring as those of his predecessors, but no more ; nor is it so beautifully expressed as by some of them.

The striking thing about Iqbal's view of tolerance, as expressed in the Persian poem quoted above, is that he who seldom preaches tolerance should have done it for once, showing thereby that even a confirmed doctrinaire may, when so minded, see flashes of the Eternal Truth. The fact, that the tolerance displayed by Iqbal is not, however, of the type we ordinarily understand by that word, is evidenced by the following remarks made by Mr. Saiyidain himself :—" But it must be clearly realized that this tolerance, which Iqbal preaches, is very different from the pseudo-tolerance of the man without strong convictions, which is very common in this age, and which is the result of an attitude of general scepticism and indifference, of not caring sincerely and passionately enough about values, or beliefs, or ideals. His tolerance is born of strength not of weakness, it is the tolerance of a man of strong faith who, possessing fervently cherished convictions of his own, realizes the value and respect due to those of others. Subject to this interpretation, Iqbal considers tolerance to be the basis of true humanity and the religious spirit ". So according to this elucidation of Iqbal's tolerance, it is evidently of two kinds, wholly distinct from each other—the tolerance as ordinarily understood, which (we are assured by the writer) is nothing but " the pseudo-tolerance of the man without strong conviction ", and the tolerance (like Iqbal's) " born of strength not weakness, the tolerance of a man of strong faith ", whose qualities are set forth (according to the writer's notion) in the extract quoted above. This subtle distinction between " pseudo " and " non-pseudo " senses of the word " tolerance " may be quite correct, in a metaphysical sense—for do not we know that certain terms are used by some persons in a " Pickwickian sense "? But the acceptance of Mr. Saiyidain's view is bound to prove quite perplexing to the average student, who is likely to

form his opinion of the conception of tolerance, as displayed in Iqbal's works, from what the poet has actually written in them, wholly irrespective of whether in composing a poem he was actuated by convictions of the pseudo or the non-pseudo type—a theory which would be analogous to that expressed by an eighteenth century English poet in composing a "loyal" toast, intended apparently in honour of the British Monarch of his days :—

God bless the King, I mean the Faith's Defender ;  
 God bless—no harm in blessing—the Pretender ;  
 But who Pretender is, or who is King,  
 God bless us all—that's quite another thing.

I hold that just as there cannot be any such thing as the simultaneous existence of political loyalty of two varieties—one to the "Faith's Defender", and another to the "Pretender"—so there cannot be any such thing as tolerance of two different kinds or standards. Though tolerance may be interpreted by each individual in his own way ; and (as happily put by the poet, Browning) "there are those who believe something and will therefore tolerate nothing ; and those who tolerate everything because they believe nothing", such a distinction obviously relates to mental temperament but not to different degrees in the acts or exercise of tolerance. It is in this view of the question that Shelley wrote that "it is not a merit to tolerate, but rather a crime to be intolerant", and "George Eliot" to the effect that "the responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have wider vision". And the contention of this thesis is that it is writ large for readers of his works that Iqbal did not possess, in an appreciable measure, this "wider-vision", which enables one to wink at human frailty, and to "gently scan your brother man", to minimise, if not ignore, differences of faith and creed, to betray no intolerance even in support of tolerance, and to give to every other human being every right that one

claims for himself. These are but some of the characteristics of a tolerant human mind—just as the Universal Mind “maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”, to quote the memorable words of the *New Testament*.

---

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Iqbal and the Cultural Unity of India.

"Hindustan from Kabul to the valley of Assam, and the island of Ceylon, is regarded as one country".

—Joseph Cunningham (in his *History of Sikhs*, 1849)

"Powerful empires existed and flourished in India while Englishmen were still wandering painted in the woods, and while the British colonies were wilderness and jungle. India has left a deeper mark on the history, the philosophy, and religion of mankind than any other terrestrial unit in the universe."

—Lord Curzon, as Viceroy of India, (at the Delhi Darbar State Banquet, on 1st January, 1903).

"Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom, and religion, which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned (as Mr. Yusuf Ali has painted out) 'a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin'. There is, in fact, an Indian character, and a general Indian personality, which we cannot resolve into its component elements".

—Sir Herbert Risley (in his *People of India*, 1908).

"India is indisputably a geographical unit, and is, as such, rightly designated by one name. India offers unity in diversity, the underlying unity being less obvious than the superficial diversity. The most essentially fundamental unity of India rests on the fact that the diverse people of India have developed a peculiar type in the world. The whole of India bears the impress of certain common movements of thought and life, resulting in the development of certain common ideals and institutions, which distinguish the civilisation of India from all other civilisations of the world, and mark it out as a unit in the history of social, religious and intellectual development of mankind. India beyond all doubt possesses a deep, underlying,

fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation, or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect ”.

—Vincent Smith (in his *Early History of India*, 1905, and the *Oxford History of India*, 1919).

“ The sense of national unity, the life of a united India will continue to strive for political expression ”.

—The Rt Hon’ble Ramsay Macdonald (in his *Awakening of India*, 1911).

“ Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Mohammadan and the Hindu, meeting and mingling together ”.

—Sir John Marshall (on “ The Monuments of Muslim India ”, in *Cambridge History of India*, 1928).

“ Beneath all distinctions (in India) there is a growing intellectual consciousness—or more truly self-consciousness—which is very closely akin to what we call Nationalism ”.

—Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax) as Viceroy of India (in his speech at the Chelmsford Club, Delhi, on the 26th of March, 1931).

“ India is the home of an ancient, but still vital, civilisation. The civilisation of India, in its origins ancient, still exists in full flower, and is the greatest factor in the lives of one-fifth of the entire population of the world. This civilisation gives the whole country a fundamental unity ; and even if the different peoples of India do not always see eye to eye on every issue, they possess quite sufficient consciousness of common unity. The typically Indian outlook has led to a view of human life, and of human institutions, which is quite different from the accepted ideas of the West. Real patriotism in India is patriotism to an idealized ‘ Mother India ’.

—L. F. Rushbrook Williams (in his *What About India*, 1938).

“ India is united by a common culture, which for many centuries has been characterised by a remarkable continuity.

India is the name of a culture, not of a race. Indian culture had an essential unity. India is both a geographical and cultural continuum ”.

—L. S. S. O’ Malley (in his *Modern India and the West*, 1941).

“ As time has gone on in our history there has been a remarkable blending and fusion of the original Hindu culture with that culture which is popularly called the Muslim culture (but which is clearly traceable to countries like Persia, and to a certain extent, Arabia), with the result that during the last three hundred years, or more, a mixed common culture has grown up which may truly be said to be ‘ Indian Culture ’.

—The Rt. Hon’ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (in his Convocation address, delivered at the Benares Hindu University, in 1941).

“ The donor believes, with his illustrious predecessor, that there is a distinct type of thought and life in India, which has been enduring through the centuries, and which is India’s greatest contribution to the world ; and in it—the Hindu and the Muslim, the Christian and the Parsi—all find common ground ”.

—His Highness the Gaekwad Maharaja of Baroda (in his Declaration establishing, in 1941, a Chair of “ Indian Cultural Unity ”, at the Benares Hindu University).

“ I am happy to learn of the celebration, in London, of the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Akbar, who had left an ineffaceable impress on Indian unity. Akbar’s inspiration still endures.”

—His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar (in his Message to the organisers of the fourth centenary celebrations, in London, in November 1942, of the birth of Akbar).

“ Indians are essentially a united people, despite their many languages and creeds ”.

—Sir Azizul Haque, the then High Commissioner for India (at a meeting, at Liverpool, in 1942.)

"India is a country fashioned by Nature to be united. There are strong influences at work emphasising the fundamental unity of the country".

—H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester (after his visit to India, in 1942.)

"To-day India has a culture which is the joint creation, and joint possession, of all the varied elements that constitute its population. One fact has always been noticeable in our history, that is our infinite capacity for adjusting ourselves to new ideas and new institutions, and hospitality to new comers and their innovations. Many peoples came to India, set up kingdoms and established themselves on the land. They then became part of the land and its culture; in their turn they stamped their culture on the people, in a process of give and take, from which both benefited, and both were soon welded into unity. There is thus the fundamental cultural unity of India. Through long ages, India has evolved a distinctive culture which is the joint creation, and common heritage, of all communities and religions—Hindu and Muslim, Christian and Parsi. This is an integral part of our life."

—Sir J. Krishnamachariar, Dewan of Baroda (in his *Speeches and Writings*, issued by the Information Office, Baroda, in 1943).

"There is a distinctive Indian national character and civilisation, which makes the Indian Hindus and Indian Muslims much closer together and more at home with each other, than either could be with other races or societies, or civilisations. In fact, they are all essentially the children of Mother India."

—Sir George Schuster (in his articles on "India's Part in South-East Asia" in the *Asiatic Review* of January, 1944).

"Great as are the differences in race, climate, and customs, there is solid ground for arguing on fundamental unity of outlook, as well as of interest, between Karachi and Calcutta, between Kashmir and Cape Comoria. The distances which formerly aggravated regional insularity, and contributed to the survival of racial antagonisms, are yielding to the influence of modern communications. In the economic field the unity of



India, already in process of accomplishment, constitutes the assumption on which all planning is based."

—The (London) Times' editorial on India, in 1944.

"Nothing can be further from my thoughts than that we should become exclusive, or erect barriers. But an appreciation of other cultures can fitly follow, never precede, an appreciation and assimilation of our own. No culture has treasures so rich as ours. Indian culture is neither Hindu, Islamic, or any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all. And every one who calls himself an Indian is bound to treasure that culture, be its trustee, and resist any attack on it."

—Mahatma Gandhi (in the "Mind of Mahatma Gandhi" 1945).

"Beneath endless diversity of races, languages, and creeds, behind the rise and fall of dynasties, there is, and has been, a fundamental unity and continuity of Indian culture, and that culture is deep-rooted in the soul of its people. The cloud of political prejudice may for a while perplex and trouble us, but no agitation can shake the foundation of that which is wrought by the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, loves and hates, of hundreds of millions of men during hundreds of years. Throughout their long history, both the Hindus and the Muslims have known the art of living together. In all fields of human values, in all that makes life worth living, Hindus and Muslims have worked hand in hand in a spirit of mutual understanding, trust, and helpfulness, contributing to the common fund of Indian culture, which holds them together as one people."

—Sir Mirza Ismail, in an article on "Communal Cord" in *Concord* (Calcutta) of 29th September, 1945.

## II

I have taken as texts the extracts made above from eminent authorities with a view to discuss, in this chapter, the question whether in the works of Iqbal there is any trace, if not influence, of Indian culture, and how he stands in relation to it. But is there any such thing as "Indian Culture"? it may be asked. It would be sufficient to quote here, in addition to the views expressed by highly qualified authorities in the above extracts, that of a talented and

cultured Indo-Muslim scholar, Mr. Abdollah Yusuf Ali—whom Sir Ahmad Hassain calls “a consummate translator of the Quran”—which is also referred to by Sir Herbert Risley and which Mr. Yusuf Ali set forth so far back as 1907, in his instructive work, called *Life and Labour of the People of India*. Thus wrote Mr. Yusuf Ali: “The diversity of social phenomena in India is a fact visible on the surface. But the ground-work on which that diversity is traced—the underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin—is often lost sight of. The unity of Indian life, however, is not confined to those points which it shares in common with the rest of the world. All its infinite variety hangs on a common thread of somewhat distinctive Indian colour. It is the failure to grasp this elementary fact that leads to so much heart-burning, jealousy, and antagonism among the different sections of the Indian population. Where they do co-operate, they find that there is much in their ideas that is harmonious, if not identical. But the power of labels and shibboleths is strong in eastern countries, and can only be removed by careful study of the ideas that lie, in substance, behind differing names and institutions. Nor has the point escaped those Europeans who (like Mr. Vincent Smith) have an intimate, practical acquaintance with life and thought in Modern India.”

Now what is that “groundwork”, “the underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin”, “the unity of Indian life”, “the common thread of a somewhat distinctive Indian colour”, and “the ideas that lie, in substance behind differing names and institutions,” to which the writer refers and, which, he adds, had not “escaped those Europeans who have an intimate practical experience with life and thought in Modern India”—if it be not what is popularly known as “Indian culture”, which historians tell us has been continuous since the dawn of Indian history? Until the end of the first decade of this century it was accepted as an

unchallengable fact that the culture of India had been dominated almost entirely by the Aryans. That view is no longer accepted, as the results of the explorations of the Indus valley areas had conclusively established the existence of an advanced type of civilisation in Sindh and the South-Western Punjab, in the third millenium before Christ, that is roughly five thousand years from now. "The Indus Valley civilisation" writes Professor Childe, an eminent authority on the subject, "represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment that could only have resulted from years of patient effort. And it has endured; it is already specifically Indian, and forms the basis of modern Indian culture". It is now an accepted fact that the culture of these pre-Aryan Indians, as well as of the South Indian Dravidians, influenced materially the culture of the Aryans themselves, in certain respects. The composite civilisation thus evolved formed the ground-work of Indian culture, and was adopted (as being well adapted to their requirements) by the various races, tribes, clans, and communities, which had poured into India during the post-Aryan period down to the eighteenth century, with the result that even those that came into the country within comparatively recent times have all been completely Indianised in their speech and culture, as for instance, the Parsees, and the foreign Muslim races—Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moghals, Pathans, Persians, and others. These races conquered India with their sword, but she conquered them all with her culture—just as Greece had done in the case of Rome, and Persia in that of Arabia.

The striking feature of Indian culture, and its greatest contribution to human progress, and the spiritual advancement of mankind has been its deep-rooted conviction—which has been frequently expressed by its exponents ever since it came into existence—that of the existence of One without a second. As the *Rig Veda* has it : *sad enam ; vipra bahudha vadanti* ("The Reality is One; the sages call

universe, unto them belongs *Eternal Truth*—unto none else, unto none else". That is the basis of Indian culture and civilisation.

The spirit of Indian culture, as set forth above by a great Indian scientist, has long been appreciated in the west not only in Europe but even in America, and some of the great European and American poets have composed beautiful poems embodying in them the idea, underlying the long-established, centuries-old, culture of this country. Amongst English poets Shelley, Wordsworth and Browning are exponents of Indian ideas; and Browning, in his *Paracelsus*, develops it strikingly with reference to a great natural phenomenon—the eruption of a volcano—which ultimately brings forth fruit gardens, where "God renews His ancient rapture". In America Emerson in his famous poem, significantly entitled "Brahma"—one of the several he composed in which he expressed Indian sentiments—made the highest ideals of this country popular. Among others again, I may mention Whittier, several of whose poems are permeated with ideas derived from the cultural resources of India. One of these is "The Reformers", in which the poet first sketches the indignation, aroused among various orthodox sections of the people as the result of the iconoclastic activities of the reformer. Then, dramatically, he pictures a newer and brighter world which, he envisages, would rise from the debris. He then sums up his conviction in the following nervous and beautiful stanza, which expresses the true Indian ideals:—

Grown wiser from the lesson given,  
I fear no longer; for I know  
That, where the share is deepest driven,  
The best fruits grow.  
So wisely taught the Indian seer:  
Destroying Siva, forming Brahm,  
Who wake by turns Earth's love and fear,  
Are one, the same.

## III

On the question of Indian culture and philosophic thought having influenced America, the following illuminating contribution by two American scholars—Dr. Christy (of the Columbia University) and Dr. Canby (editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*)—throws a flood of light on the little-known but significant link between a classic age in Indian culture and the golden age of American literature. I, therefore, make no apology for re-printing it, in a slightly abridged form :

Write the two American scholars :—"It would be a matter of deep interest", said Romain Rolland, the French critic, "to know exactly how far the American spirit has been impregnated, directly or indirectly, by the infiltration of Indian thought during the nineteenth century. There can be no doubt that it has contributed to the strange moral and religious mentality of the United States". So pronounced is America's interest in Asiatic teachings, that a Columbia University graduate earned his doctorate with a thesis entitled "Hinduism Invades America". It was during the golden age of American literature, a hundred years ago, that Hinduism invaded America in earnest. At Concord, in Massachusetts, in the 1840's, gathered the famous poets, authors, naturalists, and philosophers, who were to interpret the teachings of India to their countrymen. Here the *Bhagavad Gita* was read, and re-read, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, known in mid-century America as the founder of a new faith ; and the *Upanishads* were discussed in "conversations". Many Americans who gape at some of today's cults would be surprised to know how much, thanks to Concord orientalism, the true teachings of Hinduism have had to do with the free thought they take for granted.

"It was the destiny of the men of Concord—of Emerson particularly, and of his neighbours, Henry David Thoreau,

and Bronson Olcott—to break away from traditional Puritanism, and to speak with open minds the meaning of the Universe. Their strong voices were clearly heard discoursing on Reality and the Over-Soul. Hindu scriptures did not give them their philosophy; rather their own experiences and institutions led them to the sacred writings of the East. Since two oceans and un-numbered years separated Concord from the India of the *Vedas*, the American philosophers were fortunate in living at a time when the translations of gifted European scholars were making Hindu teaching available in the West.

“Emerson was the sage, the pure intellect of the group. Although he had been ordained a minister, he was impelled, like any Hindu, to consider a negation of the personal attributes of God. “I deny personality to God”, he said, “because it is too little, not too much”. “Nature makes a Brahman of me presently”, Emerson wrote. “Eternal necessity, eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken silence, this is her creed.” Emerson’s essay on “Compensation”, and all that he wrote in his diaries, indicate how far he had travelled from the theism of his time, and how near he had come to the *karma* of Hindu thinkers. “You think me a child of my circumstances. I make my circumstances”. And the doctrine of *maya* finds faithful echo in Emerson’s theory of ‘Illusion’. In his attitude towards the illusion, however, East and West part. Where a Hindu might traditionally see in the material world only the absence of God, Emerson looked upon it, and found it good. At this point the American Transcendentalist diverged, but not before he had availed himself freely of Hindu teaching. Eager minds, then as now, read and re-read his splendid rugged *Essays*, and the mystic poems “Brahma”, “Threnody”, “Hamatreya”, where he offered his solution of the question school boys ask, and philosophers fail to answer.

"It was Emerson who first drew Thoreau's attention to the literature of the Orient. After reading Mann, Thoreau wrote :—' I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindus without being elevated as upon the tableland of the Ghauts. The great tone of the book is of such fibre, and such severe tension, that no time or accident can relax it '. As Buddha, and the *Bhagavad Gita* recommended, Thoreau dwelt alone in a secret place without craving, and without possessions. The Yogi wrapped in his contemplations is not a far cry from the picture Thoreau gives of himself sitting lost in reverie, oblivious of time from sunset to noon, oblivious even of the songs of birds. Thoreau's *Walden* (once taken as the handbook of the British Labour Party) is the great record of Thoreau's experiment, and the sum of his conclusions on organised society. Thoreau recognised the *Sankhya* system (of Indian philosophy) as the only possible one for the mass of men. But as he said :—" Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who practise the Yog gather in Brahma the certain fruits of their works. To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a Yogi ".

"Olcott was the third most conspicuous member of the Concord orientalist. Instead of immersing himself in nature, like Thoreau, or brooding on and writing about the Over-Soul like Emerson, he made his chief interest the universal scriptures of men. Arranging for the translation of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* he wrote in his diary : " The book will be read with surprise by most, and raise curious questions in the mind of Christians generally ". All three men were widely read in the orientals before they published a single one of the books which were to have such a wide and liberal influence on American thought, in the nineteenth century, and which in the case of *Walden* and Emerson's *Essay* have taken their places as classics in the language. The sacred books of the Hindus answered their

probing questions in a way which western writers never approached, and they became to them a delight. The orientalism of the men of Concord had a marked influence on their great contemporary, Walt Whitman, the poet. Many scholars have noted ideas obviously arising in the orient which pervade his important poems. And his famous *Passage to India* is a plan for uniting the intellectual life of the West with the spiritual life of the East.

“ If it were necessary to look beyond their works, the diaries, and tablets and journals, of the men of Concord would furnish constant evidence of their enthusiasm for the Hindn classics. Of the *Bhagavad Purana* Emerson said : “ Ah, there is a book to read on one’s knees “. And again : “ Milman’s translation of *Nala and Damayanti* is nearer to my business and bosom, than is the news in today’s *Boston Journal*. I am admonished and comforted as I read “. Thoreau confessed : — “ The reading which I love best is the scriptures of the several nations, though it happens I am better acquainted with those of the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Persians, than of the Hebrews, which I have come to last “. After all the deference Emerson, Thoreau, and Olcott bestowed on the orientals, there is justice in recording the manner in which some orientals have responded. Hindus in particular have appreciated the affinity between themselves and the Transcendentalists, and have found in Emerson a fresh interpretation of their ancient thought. ‘Emerson translated into the language of modern culture’, said Heramba-chandra Maitra, writing in the *Harvard Theological Review*, ‘ what was uttered by the sages of ancient India in the loftiest strains ’.

So far the American writers. I reproduce Emerson’s *Brahma* in support of the statements made by them in their instructive article :—



If the red slayer think he slays,  
 Or if the slain think he is slain,  
 They know not well the subtle ways  
 I keep, and pass, and turn again.  
 Far or forgot to me is near ;  
 Shadow and sunlight are the same ;  
 The vanquished gods to me appear ;  
 And one to me are shame and fame.  
 They reckon ill who leave me out ;  
 With Me they fly, I am the wings ;  
 I am the doubter and the doubt,  
 And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.  
 The strong gods pine for my abode,  
 And pine in vain the sacred Seven ;  
 But thou, meek lover of the good ;  
 Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

## IV

But it might well be asked, what about the expression of Muslim thought in Indian culture? The answer that has often been given by scholars of distinction is that the assimilation of Indo-Muslim thought is one of the most significant episodes in the history of culture, in general. In the (1942) edition of an Allahabad weekly there appeared an article on "The Influence of Islamic Philosophy and Religion on Hinduism". The editor of the journal, Dr. Jafri, introduced the writer of the article in the following terms :—"We are very grateful to Dr. Tara Chand, a great orientalist, one of the greatest living scholars in India, for this precious gift. Dr. Tara Chand's contributions to Islamic literature, philosophy and art are great, and his untiring efforts in the cause of Urdu deserve our sincerest thanks". And this is how Dr. Tara Chand sums up his conclusions on the subject :—"In India the saint of the Sufi orders not only followed the principles developed by the great mystic philosophers, but borrowed many ideas

and practices from Hindu mystics. Thus both Hindu and Muslim seekers of religious truth, travellers along the path that leads to inner illumination, come to see the oneness of their quest, and the identity of their pursuits, and they discovered that in the depths of religious consciousness there is little room for distinction, and for disputation none". Dr. Tara Chand's view had been anticipated by Mr. Abdulla Yusuf Ali in his *Life and Labour of the People of India*, in which he wrote as follows :—"In the investigation of the highest and most serious problems of life, the Indian sages and seers—Hindu, Buddhist, Muhammadan, and even Christian—seem unconsciously to have 'worked, and to be working, on a common basis. Kahir expresses with wonderful clearness and his usual virility, the view 'that the Muhammadan's ideas of *nimaz* do not differ more from a Hindu's ideas of *pūja* than does the gold in a bracelet from the gold in an ear-ring". The observations of Dr. Tara Chand and Mr. Yusuf Ali are thus conclusive on the point, and both the Indo-Persian and the Urdu literatures teem with sentiments which evidence the true spirit of Indian culture. It is also wonderful how even foreigners, who reside in India for some years, catch the true spirit of Indian culture, and its higher thought. To give but one instance : Shaikh Ali Hazin, a well known Persian poet, who had settled down at Benares, in the eighteenth century, was so enamoured of his surroundings that he composed the following couplet in praise of the city he had adopted as his home.

از بنارس نروم محمد نام است اینجا  
هر برهن بچه لجه من و نام است اینجا

It means : "I shall not go away from Benares as it is the common seat of prayer and worship ; and every Brahmin boy here is either a Ram or a Lakshman". Now Hazin lived long enough at Benares to understand and appreciate the true inwardness of Indian culture. One of

his famous stanzas, bearing on the point under consideration, is as follows :—

در کشور هند چو بدیدم چپ و راست  
از دام و گردش هر طرف صوت و صداست  
گفتم که خدا چه نام دارد اینجا  
گفتا که درین دیار هر نام خداست

Its rendering into English would be :—“ In the country called Hindstan, when I looked to the right and the left, I found all sides resounding with the names of Ram and Krishna. I asked by what name God was called here, and was answered that ‘in this land every name is the name of God’. That is a correct appreciation of the cultural spirit of India, which (in the words of the poetess, Elizabeth Browning) “ if cut down in the middle shows a heart within blood-tinctured of a veined humanity ”. As regards Muslim poets who have expressed in Urdu the Indian ideal, their name is legion. But as one of the best examples of such expression in Urdu literature, I may quote the following couplets of one of the most famous poets of the nineteenth century—“ Ameer Mirza ”.

جو چشم غور سے آنکھ توحید کو دیکھا  
تو سب کچھ تو ہی تھرا ہم نہ کچھ اے خود نما تھرا  
حقیقت کھول دی آنکھ وحدت نے دلوں کی  
نہ تم ہم سے جدا تھرا نہ ہم سے جدا تھرا

It is not easy to convey in English the full significance and the beauty of the above verses, but the following translation may possibly serve the purpose of enabling the reader to grasp its substance :—

“ When I looked carefully into the mirror of unityism,  
I found that Thou alone wast existent, and that I was  
nothing, O Self-revealing One ;  
And so the mirror of unityism disclosed the reality of  
both Thine and mine—  
That Thou art not separate from me, nor am I separate  
from Thee ”.

The brief reference to the unity and universality of Indian thought from ages out of mind, which is the strikingly characteristic feature of the cultural history of India, did not escape (as pointed out by Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali) even foreign observers "who have an intimate practical acquaintance with life and thought in modern India". Of the many who have expressed this view of India, and the Indians, I may quote but one more — Sir Edwin Arnold author of the famous poem, *The Light of Asia*. He wrote of the people of India that "they have inherited an antique civilisation, and an atmosphere of philosophic thought, which is really far above the average of European mental temperament, if judged with adequate acquaintance, and apart from conventional notions and systems". And so it is. Call it by whatsoever philosophic name you may — idealism, theism, monotheism, monism, pantheism, panentheism, sufism, or vedantism, or any other "ism" — the great cultural synthesis of India is writ large on the very face of the history of mankind, so that even the whoops can read it. There is no mistaking it.

#### IV

Now what lot or part has Iqbal in the interpretation or development of this unique cultural synthesis of India? Absolutely none that I know of. Islam, as shown above, has made notable and valuable contributions to the growth and expansion of Indian culture in various spheres of activities, both spiritual and secular, and its influence in the development of philosophico-religious sphere in India is evidenced by a mass of literature produced by Muslim saints, seers, savants, and poets. A comprehensive sketch of this highly interesting subject is available in Dr. Tara Chand's learned book, issued under the appropriate title of *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, in which he offers a detailed study of Indian culture and civilization to prove the falsity of the assumptions of some Hindus and Muslims;

alike—of the Hindu who thinks that his culture is untouched by Muslim influences, and of the Muslim who thinks that he has successfully avoided Hindu contacts. The history of mediæval India contains many notable and successful instances of attempts to reconcile the two cultures, as is evident not only in the teachings of many a saint or sage, but also in art, as well as the speech of the period, where the interpenetration of Islam and Hinduism is quite easy to trace. The emergence of the various modern Indian languages can be traced directly and definitely to Muslim influence, and the Hindustani language—which is the basic form of both Hindi and Urdu—stands as the living proof of the contact, nay, communion, between the two cultures. Hindu architecture before the advent of the Muslims is recognizably distinct from the architecture of post-Islamic days; while, on the other hand, Muslim monuments, in India, show unmistakable traces of the country of their origin. In a word, the culture which we see in India to-day is neither purely Hindu, nor purely Muslim, but a happy blend or commingling of the two. Dr. Tara Chand sums up his conclusions by stating that Indian culture is synthetic in character, and though it comprehends ideas of different order, yet it eternally seeks to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements, which make up its totality. He adds:—"It is hardly possible to exaggerate the extent of Muslim influence over Indian life in all its departments", since it "had a tremendous effect on the evolution of Indian culture". Lastly, we have the testimony of so qualified a Muslim scholar as Sir Azizul Haque who, in the course of an address delivered by him, in 1942, before the Indian Society, London—and published in the (1943) March, issue of the *Hindustan Review*—declared his view that while "the contribution of Islam had been vast wherever it had come, it had attempted to bring about a happy

synthesis with the cultures with which it has come in contact, however remote or dissimilar". That is a correct estimate of Islam's great contribution to Indian culture, and the development of the synthetic culture of India.

In confirmation of the views expressed above, I may cite two other competent authorities to show the mutual influence of Hinduism and Islam on each other. "Islam in its conquering history succeeded in mass conversions, and thus produced a religious homogeneity in most countries conquered by it. But India, with her teeming millions of Hindus, was a hard nut to crack; and the Muslims of India have had to be content to be a minority, though a very numerous and an influential minority. It did not fail to impart to Hinduism some of its monotheistic zest, but on the other hand Islam in India has also been Hinduised to a considerable extent; and the Indian Muslim is not so free from caste feeling, as his brother in predominantly Muslim countries. And the pure monotheism of Islam has not been able to withstand the influence of idol worship, and hence the tombs of pirs are far more common in India than in other Muslim lands"—so writes a distinguished Indian scholar Professor A R. Wadia, in the course of his article on "Liberalising Religion" (in the *Aryan Path* for March, 1944). Curiously Sir Hassan Suhrawardy—sometime Adviser to the Secretary of State for India—writes in confirmation of the above statements of Prof. Wadia, in the course of his Introduction to Dr. Arberry's *History of Sufism*, to the following effect: "The practice of many Hindu social customs is an Indian innovation not known in other Islamic countries, Pilgrimages to shrines of the saint, giving offerings and making vows, burning *chiragh* (the oil-lamp with a wick) over the tomb of a saint, the partaking of sweets and food given as offering on tombs and shrines of saints as sacred (*tabarruk*) are not indigenous to Islam, but are the result of the influence of Hindu environment, which has also resulted in veneration for the Muslim saint, gradually merging into such phases as are hardly

distinguishable from the saint worship of Hinduism, and the animistic phases of pagan primitive religious life. Indeed, the Muslim masses of India attend the *urs* (or the annual commemoration prayers at the tomb of a saint) dressed in their best and gayest attire, with more enthusiasm and faith than in the observances of the cardinal principles of the faith of Islam." The point is thus well established, on the testimony of competent authorities, and it would be idle to labour it.

Yet another distinguished Indo-Muslim scholar—Mr. Salah-ud-din Khuda Bukhsh—has the following pertinent observation on the same subject in his *Essays: Indian and Islamic*: "We are constantly told that Mohamedans are a distinct people; that there are differences penetrating to the very root of life—differences of habit, temperament, social customs, racial type; that these differences are so vital and so enormous that the fusion between the two is a hopeless impossibility, an impracticable dream. Now I am not at all sure that this argument is sound. Admitting that the Mohamedans came to India as foreign conquerors, we cannot forget that for many centuries they have lived side by side, freely mixing with the people of the land, mutually influencing each other, taking Indian women as their wives, adopting local customs and local usages; in fine, permeated and pervaded through and through by local characteristics and local peculiarities. The most infallible proof of this we find in the marriage ceremonies, which are entirely Hindu ceremonies, in the customs of the women-folk (such as use of the vermilion mark as the symbol and token of wedded life, the restrictions imposed upon the dress and diet of widows, the disapproval, nay condemnation, of widow marriages), and, indeed, in a thousand little practices behind the *Zenana*. All this indicates somewhat more than mere superficial connection between the two races, which mainly divide the Indian population. A yet clearer proof is the unity of language, and the similarity of dress. Moreover, say what

we will, a large number (in fact, the largest portion of the Mohamedan population) are Hindu converts to Islam. It rests upon no unwarranted assumption, but upon well ascertained facts, that Hinduism and Mohamedanism have acted and reacted upon each other ; influencing social institutions, colouring religious thoughts with their mutual, typical, religious hues. The union of the two streams of Hinduism and Islam had flowed side by side in India."

But where does Iqbal stand in furthering the process of evolution of Indian culture, either as a poet or a thinker ? His poetry is an expression of his philosophy, while the latter is neither Indian nor Muslim, as the Quran lends no sanction or support to the theory of a Superman, adapted by Iqbal from Nietzsche—a Superman drawn from the ranks not of the aristocrats but the common people, and born an infidel but made a believer in God, and a philosophy, which (when analysed and sifted) proves of little worth as a sound system. For this reason it is not only the Hindu reader of Iqbal's poems who finds his mind obfuscated by their perusal. It would seem that the Christian reader also finds himself in the same unhappy predicament—judging from the observations of the late Lord Meston, who said :—" Iqbal seems to me a bundle of paradoxes. He was saturated with western culture, yet he was everlastingly inveighing against western civilization ; he was in the tradition of Islam, yet he was continually storming against Muslim conservatism". As compared with Iqbal's poems, those of Rabindranath Tagore appeal to and attract many non-Hindu readers. I have quoted in an earlier chapter, two European scholars' appreciation of Tagore, but if one more testimony were needed it would be sufficient to quote that of a distinguished Indian scholar, Sir Bomanji Wadia, (sometime Judge of the Bombay High Court, and later Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University), who wrote in the September, 1942, issue of the *Hindustan*



*Review* :—" The great poet of India, who died last year (1911), created beauty as few other poets have done. His poems, and his songs, are the spontaneous outpourings of a happy soul, full of the joy of life." Has anything similar to it been said of Iqbal by any competent non-Muslim critic? On the contrary, on the authority of Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Iqbal " was a strange blend of innate conservatism and revolutionary doctrines, for the individual or society, without regard to logic, practicability, or consistency." The opinions expressed by Lord Meston and Mr. Yusuf Ali show that the estimates of Iqbal by the Scot Christian, and the Indian Muslim, (both of the Indian Civil Service) were almost identical. It should, therefore, be recorded with regret that no contribution, worth the name, in the development and evolution of Indian culture, can be justly placed to the credit of Iqbal. Weightier words on the subject have not been uttered than those by Mahatma Gandhi :—" Nothing can be further from my thoughts than that we should become exclusive, or erect barriers. But an appreciation of other cultures can fitly follow, never precede, an appreciation and assimilation of our own. No culture has treasures so rich as ours. Indian culture is neither Hindu, Islamic, or any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all. And every one who calls himself an Indian is bound to treasure that culture, be its trustee, and resist any attack on it." Judged in the light of these observations, Iqbal is clearly out of court. One intellectually so great as Iqbal, who was deeply conversant with the literatures and philosophies of the East and the West, and who was withal endowed with poetic genius, could have achieved a great position for himself in the cultural evolution of India. But evidently, owing to his mental prepossessions, he did not share Mahatma Gandhi's view, with the inevitable result that howsoever great his position in the culture of Arabia and Iran, he has scarcely any in that of India.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Iqbal and Patriotism.

" I do love

My country's good with a respect more tender,  
More holy and profound, than mine own life. "

—Shakespeare (*Coriolanus*).

" Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,  
His first best country, over is at home."

—Goldsmith (*The Traveller*).

" The land we from our fathers had in trust,  
And to our children will transmit, or die ;  
This is our maxim, this our piety."

—Wordsworth (*National Independence*).

" Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who ne'er to himself hath said :

' This is my own, my native land ' !

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,

As home his footsteps he hath turn'd

From wandering on a foreign strand !

—Sir Walter Scott (*Lay of the Last Minstrel*)

" He who loves not his country can love nothing ".

—Byron (*The Two Foscari*).

" That man is the best cosmopolite

Who loves his native country best."

—Tennyson (*Hands All Round*).

" I vow to thee my country all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love,  
The love that asks no questions : the love that stands  
the test,

That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best.

The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,

The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice."

—Sir Arthur Cecil Spring-Rice (*My Country*).

" O Motherland ! We pledge to thee,  
 Head, heart, and hand, through the years to be.  
 Our heart's where they rocked our cradle,  
 Our love where we spent our toil,  
 And our faith, and our hope, and our honour,  
 We pledge to our native soil. "

—Rudyard Kipling (*The Native Born*).

" God gave all men all earth to love,  
 But since our hearts are small,  
 Ordained for each one spot should prove  
 Beloved over all ",

—Rudyard Kipling (*Sussex*)

" There is no gainsaying the fact that racially and politically we are all Indians—inheritors of the same old civilisation, with our destinies linked together. Our foundations of life are the same, and our political and social salvation can only lie in both Hindus and Muslims pooling their energies together for the reconstruction of a better India, since any other road will lead India to chaos, anarchy, bloodshed, and perpetual subjection. For better or for worse 'till death do us part' that is our destiny."

—Sir Sultan Ahmed (in his Convocation Address, delivered at the Muslim University, Aligarh, in 1940).

" India's civilization and culture are among the proudest in the world."

Sir Firoz Khan Noon (in his *India*, in "The British Commonwealth in Pictures" series, 1941).

" We Indians—while we have (like other nations) our domestic difficulties—have one great asset, and that is India's ancient culture."

—Sir Azizul Haque (in his Address delivered in London, on the 8th November, 1942).

" Unless a common bond unites us with the Hindus as the sons of a common mother-country, having both to work together their joint salvation, any agitation for political reform will be vain and valueless."

—The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari (in an Address delivered at Delhi, in 1941).

"The 380 million people of India can claim a civilisation more ancient even than ours. India can boast of an ancient civilization and of a long history common to all her people, of which all Indians are equally proud—proud of India's wonderful past, and of the greatest future that is in store for her. Is there any Indian who is not proud to be called an Indian? Is there any Indian, of any community, who has not felt a thrill of pride in the thought that he is a fellow-countryman of a man like Rabindranath Tagore, who was so uniquely honoured by the Oxford University".

—The Rt. Hon'ble L. S. Amery, M. P., as Secretary of State for India (in his Addresses collected in *India and Freedom*, 1942).

"There are those who prefer to think that India is not, and cannot be, one Nation. To me, India, one Nation, is a most inspiring thought. I see, too, all around me the growth of this consciousness. This is the land of all of us, to whatever race or creed we may belong. My country first, from which my life has sprung, whose people are my people, whose very soil is dear. He who has no country is nothing; the sap of life cannot flow into him, he must live on thin intellectual sunlight. Our first and deepest loyalty must be to our own country. In unity alone there is freedom, and in freedom alone lies real life and happiness. The destiny of India is unity."

—Sir Muzza Ismail (in his Convocation Addresses at the Patna and the Dacca Universities, delivered in November and December, 1942, respectively).

"India is not only a very well-defined geographical unit, with natural frontiers formed by the mountains and the sea; it has been from time immemorial a cultural and spiritual unit. That unity has been forged through countless ages by the culture, traditions, and usages, of the successive generations of men who have migrated or conquered, settled down, and been absorbed through the predominant qualities of tolerance and adaptability, which are the characteristic of Indian civilisation."

—The Hon'ble Sir Ardeshir Dalal (in his *An Alternative to Pakistan*, 1943).

"The glories of Moghul architecture combine in themselves traits of both Islamic and Indian art. The Rajput school of painting bears the unmistakable stamp of Persian influence at the Moghul court. Hindi poetry has been enriched by Muslim poets—such as Amir Khusro and Kabir, to mention only two—just as Urdu poetry has been enriched by Hindu poets, among whom the names of Naseem (Daya Shankar Kaul) and Chakbast (Brh̃j Narain) are well known. The Urdu language itself, the common language of both Hindus and Muslims in Northern India, is the symbol of the fusion of Hindu and Islamic cultures, the result or the assimilation of Hindi and Persian. The best and greatest exponents of Indian music, since Moghul times, have been Muslims, whose rendering of *kheyal*, *holi*, and *bhajans*, are still popular among all sections of the people." Even today among the masters (*ustads*) of *kheyal*, the majority are Muslims. In religion, the influence of Islam is traceable in the teachings of such Hindu saints as Chaitanya and others; and in the mediæval mystics of Northern India (such as Kabir and Dadu) we see the fine flowering of the synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religious thought. In Sufism Hindu mysticism (especially of the Bhakti school) has found a close parallel, which forcibly suggests inter-penetration of thought and ideas.

—Sir Mirza Ismail, in an article on "Communal Cord", in *Concord* (Calcutta) of 29th September, 1916).

"Is there one amongst us who does not wish this land of our birth great and respected? I regard myself as an Indian first. I stand for a free and independent India. No Indian, worthy of the name, would stand for anything less. The future of India, its place in the comity of nations, its dignity and standing in the eyes of the world, are matters of concern to every true Indian; for this great land of ours has in the past made its contribution to human thought and progress the world over. We should work for a new India, which will take her proper place in the councils of the world, and make, as in the days long ago, her contribution to the uplift of humanity, and advance of the spirit of true civilization."

—From the address of His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the

occasion of the celebration of his fifty second birthday, in February, 1946.

## II

In this chapter, after summing up some of the important discussions in the previous chapters, and supplementing them with additional data, where necessary, with a view to bringing out their full import and significance, I propose focusing attention mainly on patriotism in Iqbal's works. The first plea, urged in the Introductory chapter, was that this work was a critical appraisal of Iqbal. Though there are a few good books, in English, dealing with Urdu literature—which I have already referred to, and also quoted from—there are fewer such works in Urdu itself, perhaps the most notable in the lot being the essay on Urdu poetry prefixed to the collection of his poems by "Hali". But, speaking broadly, there is not yet in existence, in Urdu, a critical literature worth the name. This view is expressed in almost every critical history of Urdu literature. To refer to but two recent books, I may quote from the *Handbook of Urdu Literature* by Dr. Mohan Singh "Diwana"—a well-known Punjabi scholar—and from the *History of Urdu Literature* by (the late) Dr. Graham Bailey, who was a recognised authority on the subject he dealt with. Writes Dr. Mohan Singh :—" Criticism (in Urdu literature) is entirely formal, confined to *qafiyas radifs*, scansion, pronunciation, displacement of Hindi by Persian words, translation of Persian idioms and compounds, and preference of Delhi usage to Lucknow usage, or *vice-versa*. In the matter of substance, almost every writer has had applied to him, in some book or other, by some critic or other, almost the same epithets and adjectives as used elsewhere for the very best and greatest authors. Adjectives are loosely applied and quite abundantly", and also "set and standardised terms of praise and blame". Thus : "all critical appreciation of Urdu literature"—writes Dr. Singh—"is entirely formalistic". The same point of view

is expressed, tersely, but emphatically, by Dr. Bailey as follows :—" Criticism (in Urdu literature) tends to confine itself to questions of verbal cleverness and linguistic correctness. Little or no effort is made to discuss an author's thoughts and meaning, or estimate his poetry as a whole ". An attempt has been made in this book, with what success it is for the reader to judge, " to discuss the thoughts and meaning ", of Iqbal, and " to estimate his poetry, as a whole ". And estimating Iqbal's poetry " as a whole ", what is the impression that an unprejudiced reader is likely to carry on a careful consideration of the materials brought together in this volume ? Can Iqbal be justly said to be a great poet, or a great philosophic poet, judged in the light of either subject-matter, or diction, or capacity to rouse the emotions of readers who approach his works for deriving from them pleasure, and not to be preached at ? All these topics, and several other matters ancillary to them, have been discussed at some length in the previous chapters

We have seen that the dogmatic philosophy preached by Iqbal in the majority of his works, which are mostly in Persian, is not likely to appeal to any section of readers other than those who are believers in religious dogmatics. As such readers of liberal and progressive views, whether in the sphere of religion and philosophy—or, for the matter of that, any other intellectual or emotional aspect of life—are not likely to appreciate Iqbal's poems, or be attracted by them. Apart from that, the language in which by far the greater portion of Iqbal's poems are composed—namely, that of Persia (or Iran)—is now unknown to the vast majority of even Indo-Muslim readers ; while there is no evidence that his Persian poems have at all appealed to readers outside India. Ample evidence in support of this contention has been brought together in previous chapters, but it may be permissible to add one more emanating from an authoritative source. In his " Study of Iqbal's Poetry ",

contributed to the *Hindustan Review* of November, 1942, Dr. Iqbal Hussain (of the Patna University), and author of an excellent thesis (published under the title of *Early Persian Poets of India*), writes on this subject as follows:—

“ Iqbal would have been a greater benefactor of Urdu if he had disentangled himself from the labyrinth of Persian and written all his poems in Urdu. The Persian poetry of Indian poets has never been read, much less appreciated, in Persia. Professor Browne feels no hesitation in saying that the Persian literature, produced in India, has not ‘ the real Persian flavour, the blar, as the Irish call it, which belongs to the indigenous product ’.”

As regards the poet's estimate of his Indian fellow-countrymen Dr. Hussain quotes the verse, which says that “ in the land of Hind, the voice of life is ineffective, for the dead body does not come to life through the song of David ”. On this remarks Dr. Hussain : “ he (the poet) left his dead countrymen to their fate, and began to send forth his stimulating messages to Afghanistan, Persia, and Central Asia, in Persian. At times he thought that his Persian verses produced a revivifying effect on the Persian-speaking people, for he wrote, that ‘ my voice has enkindled the old fire in Persia ’. Alas ! how mistaken the poet was. His message did not stir the soul of the Persian-speaking people. European influences could not be checked. Socio-religious chaos was giving forth new forces. The Muslim youth of Central Asia felt no hesitation in entering the Bolshevik fold, and to the Persian nationalism became his best religion. The Afghan, who by nature has always been impervious to all foreign influences, remained indifferent towards him. It is really unfortunate that Iqbal did not write all his verses in Urdu ”. Such is Dr Iqbal Hussain's estimate. Sir Ahdul Qadir, speaking, in 1942, on the same subject, in a broadcast from Delhi, expressed himself as follows :—“ The latest development in Persia is a spirit of nationalism, which was successfully exploited by Raza Shah



Pahlavi, who had recently abdicated. In the literature of modern Iran, the note of nationalism was predominant " — which (as we have seen) Iqbal condemned in his *Javed Nameh*.

As for the smaller portion of verses which Iqbal wrote in Urdu, I have expressed my opinion on the defects in their style and diction, which render them uncongenial to the taste of those who appreciate high class poetry, in simple and chaste language. The view so expressed by me is supported by Dr. Grahame Bailey (in his *History of Urdu Literature*) as follows :—" His (Iqbal's) poetical writings show excessive Persian influence, which unfortunately is most clearly seen in his latest poems. The continuance of over-Persianisation (which is one of the greatest hindrances to the true development of Urdu poetry) has prevented the employment of new forms of verse". And Dr. Mohan Singh " *Diwana* " (in his *Handbook of Urdu Literature*) records his opinion that the poet " mainly cultivated an over-Persianized style, overladen with abstract, standardized, imagery ". All these criticisms from authoritative and unimpeachable sources, supporting the contentions urged in this book, should carry conviction to the mind of any impartial reader that Iqbal, by the wrong choice he made of the subject-matter of his poems, the foreign idiom of Iran he employed in writing the greater part of his poetical works, and the " over-Persianized style " of even his Urdu poems, made it almost impossible for their being appreciated by the vast majority of Indian readers, outside the circle of his votaries and admirers.

### III

But that is not all. The trouble with Iqbal was that he misconceived the whole political situation in many of the Muslim countries, both in the light of history, and also the trend of present political forces, and gave expression to his misconceived views in his poems. He could not visualise,

for instance, the Turkey of to-day—with the Caliphate abolished for good ; Islam no longer the State religion ; woman completely enfranchised and their seclusion a thing of the past ; the Arabic replaced by the Latin script ; nearly twenty thousand Arabic and Persian words and expressions rooted out of the Turkish language ; laws based on European models placed on the statute-book (superseding the Islamic *shariat*) ; the whole country drilled, so to say, into western clothes, manners, and customs, and the other social amenities of western style of living, including even cabaret, and western style of dancing ? That Iqbal could not visualise modern Turkey, or modern Iran, is not surprising, since neither of them had attained their present development when he composed the vast bulk of his poems. Even to-day by far the larger number of English-knowing Muslims in India are largely, if not wholly, unfamiliar with the kaleidoscopic changes that have come about during the twentieth century both in Turkey and Iran — in the former under the influence of Kemal Ataturk, and in the latter under that of Raza Shah Pahlavi — with the result that both these age-long, mediæval-minded, countries have been metamorphosed by their great leaders into modern nationalist States. Turkey has already acquired full status as such ; while Iran is on a fair way to achieve for herself the same position in the world. But these modern developments, in Turkey and Iran, have not as yet been appreciated by a large number of educated Indian Muslims, even by those who know English, and who can easily learn and understand the present condition of these countries, from a perusal of the latest works issued in that language. It had been, therefore, of great advantage to India that a Turkish Press Delegation came to this country, early in 1943. They visited various places—in British India, and also in a few Indian States—expressed their views freely in reply to questions put to them by press representatives and others, and received addresses from several public bodies, including

the Delhi branch of the Muslim League, to which they replied through their spokesman Much light has thus been thrown on the political conditions and ideals of modern Turkey, and the mentality of her nationals, by the replies given, and the statements made, by the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation.

To the address presented by the Delhi Branch of the Muslim League, emphasising in it their now well-known shibboleths and slogans—the “two nation” theory, the demand for Pakistan (sovereign States carved out of India where the Muslims are in a majority), and for pan-Islamic solidarity at the post-war Conference—the leader of the Delegation said in his reply:—“Returning to what has been said by our kind host, the President of the Delhi Muslim League, we have listened with deep interest to the convictions and aims of his party, which he has expressed ; but you will agree with us that if after a stay of so few days we were to express opinions on Indian questions it would be very strange. We have come here only as journalists to look around, and to form our own opinions, and on our return to our country we will give as accurate a picture as we can of India. The Turkish press, as a free press, has always followed the Indian problem with deep interest, and we have studied this question from several points of view. Ever since the victorious conclusion of our nation's war of independence, there can be no Turk who can oppose the independence of any nation in the world, but we should also make it clear that it is against the principles and practice of modern Turkey to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries and nations”. This statement should be alike interesting and instructive to politically-minded Indians. Subsequently Renter wired the comments of the Turkish press on the news of the reception accorded by India to the Turkish Delegation, in the course of which we find the passage quoted below :—“Indians

can be sure that Turkey has a feeling of friendship *for all Indians*. The exchange of views between the Turkish journalists and Indian leaders will undoubtedly prove useful to India, as well as to Turkey's ally—Britain". It was stated in the press that the reply of the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation, to the Delhi Muslim League address, caused profound disappointment to the Muslim League deputation, since there was not even a syllable in it to encourage them in their demands; on the contrary, there were clear references in it—as also in the Turkish press comments, quoted above—to India *as a whole*, to the freedom of "India", and Turkey's "friendship for all Indians".

But while in the earlier stages of the tour, the leader of the Turkish Deputation had taken up a negative attitude, towards Pakistan and Pan-Islamism, he became positive, affirmative, and even assertive, at later stages. "We are Turks first and Muslims afterwards, and we are not interested in any scheme of Pan-Islamic Federation, nor even in Pan-Turkism", was what he declared replying to a question put to him, at a party given in honour of the Delegation by the Punjab Muslim Press, at Lahore, and that too in the presence of the then Muslim Prime Minister of the Punjab. He added that though "religion was an honourable institution, yet it was individual and personal, and had no place in politics in Turkey. A new spirit was now pervading our country under which no religious feeling, or classification, was allowed to operate to the political disadvantage of the country". Replying to another question whether Turkey had not harmed the cause of Islam by taking up nationalism in preference to Islamic universalism, he said:—"Since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire we had wars with Persia, our Muslim neighbour. Till 1912 we had Christian minorities. We lost them. Arab countries detached themselves

from us, and not we. We now have much better relations with these countries, since we developed our faith in national principle, and faithfulness to the nationalist cause, rather than in a dreamy outlook of religious universalism". On a question having been put to him: "Why was not Turkey doing anything for Indian Muslims, who were at war with Hindus, and the Government", the leader of the Delegation replied:—"It is an internal question. We have had no occasion so far to express our sympathy, as we have not seen India involved in any external question. If the Muslims of Hindustan had interfered in our internal politics, we would not have liked it at all". He also reaffirmed that "religion in Turkey is only a private affair, a question of conscience of each individual, and it has nothing to do with politics, government, or administration of the country". To the above reply, it was reported in the press that a prominent Muslim Leaguer, who was also a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, "indignantly protested", and remarked that "the Turks would be making the mistake of their lives if they ignored the teachings of Islam", and he went on to say that it was "sheer religious affinity which prompted the Indian Muslims to help Turkey during the Khilafat movement". To this observation, however, the Turkish leader gently retorted:—"But the Hindus also helped us". He then asserted that "Turkey's present policy was the outcome of centuries of hard struggle. The Turks had at last discovered that the obeying of religion and the administration of a country, were two different things, and consequently they had successfully divorced religion from politics". To a direct question whether he was a Turk first or Muslim first, he promptly said "Turk". Asked if they believed in "Islamic brotherhood", he said: "yes; but we also believe in the principle which goes even beyond this one. We believe that if nations are equal in rights, in honour, and in spirit,

all these nations, in the whole world, should consider themselves as brother nations ”.

On another occasion the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation said : “ What we wish most is for all nations to conform to new conditions of life, and strengthen themselves through complete mastery of science, economics, and high cultural values, so that they might go ahead as the more advanced nations of other religions and races. As a nation we have had the best experience during the centuries of quarrels and fighting with neighbouring Europe, and we came at last to the conclusion that there was no other way for our salvation and independence than to develop scientific mentality ”. Lastly, he harked back to his ideal of unity in nationalism when he declared that “ the solution that we have searched for our security is that we must all be unified and act together. We hope that the people of India too are endeavouring themselves to look to the situation of the whole of India, and act accordingly ”. On the eve of their departure from India, the leader of the Delegation issued a statement, in the course of which he expressed himself as follows : — “ The Turkish nation is a western nation like the French, the Italians, the Swedes, and the characteristics which separate it from the others are only those which exist between western civilised nations. Turkey is a secular State. Religion is separated from the functions of State. Religious argument is not permitted to play a part either in legislation, or in questions of administration, or politics, or in social matters, or in education. The Ottoman Empire, in accepting the Islamic religion, had adopted only the Sunni sect of that religion, and this engendered separatism within the community. Secularism has assured the Turkish unity. Turkey is revolutionary. This means that Kemalist Turkey did not hesitate to cut itself free from even the strongest traditional influences, when it was

a question of executing social and administrative reforms judged to be necessary in the interests of the nation. . Such measures are discussed, approved or rejected, with a liberty free of all restraint or coercion. To-day, when there is no longer any difference between them and other western peoples, the Turks of Kemalist Turkey are more nationalist, more Turkish, than they were in the times when they differed completely from Europeans, whether in costume, or in head gear, or in their artistic and scientific institutions ". This represents an ideal very widely different from that of the Muslim League. But the position of the modern Turk is explicit and unequivocal. The famous song of Emin—the poet of the Turkish renaissance—has for its refrain words which embody the spirit of the nationalist movement of modern Turkey :—

" I am a Turk,

My race and language are great ".

What a striking contrast between the above, and the opening lines of one of Iqbal's Urdu poem, to the effect that " China, Arabia and India are ours : we are Muslims, and the whole world is ours ". The mentality betrayed by the two poets is thus poles apart—the one, writing in his mother-tongue, Turkish, steeped to his lips in the realistic nationalism of a modern, secular, State ; the other, writing mostly in the foreign idiom of Iran, expressing a mediæval sentimentalism, incapable of realisation in future, and never realised in the past. Again, what an instructive contrast between the mentality of Iqbal, who could find nothing in India but defeatism, despondency, and depression, and the Turkish Press Delegation, whose leader delivered himself (at the civic reception, given them by the Mayor of Calcutta) as follows :—" Everywhere we have gone, we have seen not only the glories of India's past culture, art, and history, but we have seen equally the great promise of India's future role which, we are confident, will be no less glorious than what has gone before ".

## IV

Now all these declarations of the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation—declarations not only unequivocal, but also seemingly heretical from the Iodo-Muslim standpoint—must have given a very rude shock to those who were evidently out to secure from him sympathy and support for their theories, contentions, and demands, but to no purpose. On the contrary, those replies and assertions clearly establish the fact that modern Turkey is an entirely secular State, based on the principles of nationalism, democracy, and separation of State from church and creed. The antiquated idea of making religion the basis of the State had been deliberately rejected by the modern Turk, as not only absolutely undemocratic and anti-national, but wholly impracticable in the present state of the world. It was only when Turkey had shed its mediæval and theocratic mentality, under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk, that her nationals succeeded in transforming what had soeringly been called "the sick man of Europe" into the great and glorious nation, of which her nationals are so justly proud to-day. If the Turkish Press Delegation to India had proved anything it was that the idea of an Islamic nation, or federation, or confederacy, is wholly an impracticable idea, in the world to-day. The Turkey of to-day looks to the future rather than to the past, and has no interest in ideologies which run counter to modern modes of thought. The social and political revolution that led to the emergence of the new Turkey was unmistakably secular in outlook. This did not mean the end of religion in Turkey; but it did mean that the Turks, as a nation, were once for all weaned from their allegiance to the ideal of a theocratic state, such as is still striven after by a fairly large section of Muslims in India. Religion had come to be regarded there as the individual's private concern, and had ceased to count as a political factor, or dividing line. In other words, Turkey.



had adopted the main line of historical development, which the bulk of Europe had passed through, and rationalism and economic independence had become its watch-words. The Turkish Press Delegation had thus done a real service to India by pointing out the futility of religious sentimental politics, in the world to-day.

Thus the fundamental principle of modern Turkey—the relegation of religion as a matter of individual conscience, without any claim on the political life of the nation—is practically the same as the attitude of Soviet Russia. The State policy in both the countries is to promote the permeation of the scientific spirit in the people. This is the antithesis of the basic principle of those who would make religion the basis of social, economic, and political life. It was, therefore, that the very suggestion, by some persons in this country, to that effect, had elicited the blunt repudiation by the Turkish Press Delegation leader, of all interest in schemes of pan-Islamism, and the unequivocal declaration that they were 'Turks first and anything else afterwards, and also the warning that if a preacher from India visited Turkey with the object of rousing the religious spirit, he would not be welcomed there. The following observations made by Dr. Rezaul Karim, a well-known Indo Muslim publicist, on the progress of Turkey, and the lessons it has for India, are quite apposite :—" In India, placed as we are, we cannot prosper unless we follow the example of Turkey. Our religious and personal laws must be changed so as to fit in with needs of the time. We should have to secularise our education. The 'mullas' are the curse of our society, and we shall have to rid ourselves of their baneful influence. Our entire womenfolk are in hopeless bondage, and they must have to be liberated from mediaeval shackles. The political ideals of present-day Indian Muslim are no better than those of pre Revolution Turkey. The ideal of pan Islamism was a cause of the

permanent weakness of the old Turkey. It is good for the world that Turkey has been able to discard the last speck of pan-Islamism and it would be better for us if we abandon that idea for ever, and love India as our own land, and declare boldly, like the young Turks, that we are not Muslims but we are Indians". It is, indeed, a great pity that the achievements of modern Turkey—and also of modern Iran—have been so far completely lost on a very large section of Indian Muslims, with the result that they still continue to labour under the influence of mediæval mentality, which is the greatest hindrance to their advancement.

## V

Nor could Iqbal picture in his mind's eye the progress Iran would make on western lines, which she had achieved in recent years. Although she has not yet advanced along the same lines as Turkey in all respects, nevertheless she has made remarkable progress in shedding the shackles of dogmatism and mediævalism, and betaking herself to the modern methods of a nationalist, secular, State, as would appear from a study of literature dealing with that country. In his *Modern Iran*—the latest work on the subject—Mr. L. P. Elwell Sutton presents an illuminating picture of Raza Shah's reign, for a period of fifteen years from the time of his crowning himself, in 1926, as the Shah of Iran, until his abdication in 1941. Raza Shah fitted into the modern period of Persian history as Kamal Atatürk did in that of modern Turkey. Mr. Elwell Sutton emphasises that Raza Shah encouraged his people to look not so much to the Islamic past, as the ancient Iran of Cyrus and Darius, and the heroes of the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi, and that the national aims of modern Iran "are the same as those of any other proud nation, the maintenance of her independence and unity"—and not pan-Islamism. He adds : " It is all part of his (Raza Shah's) fervent nationalism, his

determination to establish the independence of his country once for all, and to admit no influence which might warp or submerge the true Iranian 'soul'. Iranian unity is cultivated, while communism, class antagonism, and other disruptive ideas, suppressed; and Islam is only permitted in so far as it is a unifying force. The aim of the Shah is that the advantage of Western material progress shall be absorbed into, and become a part of, Iranian national life". It is not possible for me to summarise this comprehensive work, the whole of which should be carefully studied by students of the fast-changing sociological conditions of modern Iran.

But to give some concrete examples of Raza Shah's reforms, I may record that the Shah replaced (as in Turkey) the laws of Islam by Civil and Criminal Codes, based on French and Italian models, and (having thus modernised Iranian laws) abolished the system of capitulations, under which foreigners were until then not subject to the courts of the country, but to special tribunals presided over by their own fellow countrymen. This was a notable step in the modernisation of the country. Again, though unlike Turkey, Iran has still kept to the Arabic script, there is a conscious drive, throughout the land, to root out Arabic words from the vocabulary, and to substitute for them Iranian terms and phrases. In legal, technical, scientific or commercial matters, new words are being coined almost daily from non-Arabic sources, and their use in the press being compulsory under orders of Government, they soon gain currency. The abolition of the *purdah* was enforced with characteristic vigour, and women in veils are not allowed in shops, in conveyances, or even on the streets! When *purdah* was banned, a sum of £25,000/- was sanctioned to provide clothes for the poorer women. *Muta*, or temporary marriages, and polygamy, were strenuously discouraged, and the

compulsory registration of such unions had placed considerable restrictions on them. The bride was given the right to sue for divorce if the bridegroom concealed from her, before the wedding, the existence of his other wife or wives; and married again without her consent. Medical fitness of both the parties was made a condition precedent to a valid marriage. To cope with child marriage, the State had fixed a minimum age of seventeen years for men, and fifteen for women. It is thus clear that the overpowering ideal of the Iranians of to-day is thus cultivation of a strong spirit of nationalism in every field of life, and in every sphere of activity, not excluding even foreign influences, and adapting them to their requirements in a way which may prove conducive to the development and expansion of Iranian nationalism on the same lines as that achieved by the Turks in their country. It is because even the vast majority of educated Indian Muslims are, to a large extent, ignorant of the present sociological conditions in other Muslim countries, and the great progress made in some of them towards the growth and development of nationalism, that they still continue to express appreciation of the poems composed by Iqbal, which preach extra territorialism as well as religious internationalism against territorial nationalism.

## VI

One of the latest writers on the subject—Margaret Pope, an English journalist—who had travelled extensively in the Middle East—had expressed her views in some Indian journals on the problem of Nationalism versus Pan-Islamism in the Muslim countries outside India, as follows:—  
 “Turkey, the most progressive of all Muslim States, found it necessary that religious considerations should give way to national in matters affecting the well-being of the State, and, by so doing, welded her people into a nation such as they had not been for centuries. Iran, to a certain extent, did the same. That Egypt’s outlook was national rather than Islamic was evinced by her intense struggle for

freedom under Zaghlul, and other leaders, and her almost complete indifference to the welfare of other Muslim countries. It is well-known that the Arabs of Syria and Palestine are far more concerned with Arab interest than with any relating to Pan-Islamism. The Mufti of Jerusalem himself called a Pan-Arab Conference in Syria, in 1937, at which 450 delegates, including Bishops of the Orthodox Church, were present. I have often met national leaders, who were not Muslims, in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. George Antonius, author of the best account of the Arab national movement (called *Arab Awakening*) was an Arab Christian ”.

The writer then goes on to say :—“ On my arrival in India, I was astonished at the rather unrealistic attitude of many Indian Muslims, mostly those who had never been outside India towards the policy of the Middle Eastern countries. On the Frontier I even heard the suggestion that the Muslims of India might unite in a vast Islamic State stretching from the Punjab to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea ! A fascinating idea, no doubt, but from what I know of the Arab peoples, I think it would be extremely difficult to persuade them to do any such thing. The reasons are not hard to find. *To-day, religious bonds cannot be allowed to interfere with basic political considerations. The only political doctrine that these countries support whole-heartedly is nationalism ; they are seeking with nationalism, and they care for little else. Bitter experience has taught them that unity within their own borders is a far better guarantee of strength and independence than any number of cultural and religious links. They can in no sense be allowed as a stumbling block to national unity, which is the first essential to a sound and progressive national Government such as that of Turkey* ”. I have already recorded the establishment, in 1945, of the League of Arab States, and discussed its great significance in the sphere of national, secular, States.

I may add as a foot-note to the above sketch of modern conditions in Turkey and Iran that, in 1938, the idea of a Pan Islamic Federation of States was mooted, at the Mecca Conference, by the representatives of several Muslim countries. The proposal was then rejected outright, largely through the influence of Turkey, the premier Middle East State of to-day. Since then I have not come across, in the foreign press, any expression on the part of the people of the Muslim countries, for any Islamic confederation; nor does it seem at all likely that the idea of theocratic State stands any chance of success now, in even the Muslim world, as by far the more important part of it has clearly outgrown it. What appeal, therefore, Iqbal's Persian poems—constituting the vast bulk of his works—are likely to make to the modern Iranians to whom (in the words of Dr. Iqbal Hussain) "nationalism" had become "his best religion", and who as such cares for patriotic rather than religious poetry, especially of the didactic type that Iqbal composed?

## VII

And leaving aside foreign Muslim lands, what lot or part have India and her people, and their great heritage of culture and civilisation—to which Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Sir Azizul Haque, Sir Mirza Ismail, and even Mr. Amery, have referred to in the passages taken as mottos to this chapter—in Iqbal's poems? Did India fire the imagination of the poet, as it had evidently done that of even the prosaic Mr. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India, who having been born in India, has evidently a genuine appreciation of the unity, culture and civilisation of this country? I have quoted, as one of the mottos to this chapter, some extracts from Mr. Amery's book—called *India and Freedom*—in appreciation of India's culture and civilisation. I shall quote below some further extracts from the same book containing sentiments which would do credit to the most patriotic

Indian. Says Mr. Amery :—" India is a definite region of the world, inhabited by a no less distinctive breed of men. By India I mean India as a whole ; India as nature and history have shaped her ; India with her infinite diversity and underlying unity, India as she is to-day and as we wish her to be in the years to come. India, within the quadrilateral of her mighty mountain ranges and spacious seas, has no natural internal frontiers, no natural barriers behind which clearly separated nationalities would grow up and live their several mainly self-regarding lives. Hinduism and Islam, in very varying proportions, are conterminous over the whole sub continent. What is more, in the process, history has created, in India (in spite of infinite variations in detail, variations everywhere shading insensibly into each other) her own distinctive human type, and in large measure her own distinctive way of life. Beneath all the differences of religion, of culture, of race, and political structure, there is an underlying unity. There is the fundamental geographical unity. There is the broad unity of race which makes Indians, as a whole, whatever their differences among themselves, a distinctive type among the main races of mankind "

But did not Iqbal also, inspired by patriotic sentiments, compose his famous poem in Urdu, called *Hindustan Hamara* or " Our Hindustan ", it may be asked. Yes, he did ; but did he not later—at least in the opinion of non-Muslims—neutralise the effect of it by another poem which opened with the words ; " China, Arabia and India are ours ; we are Muslims and the whole world is ours " ; when if only the poet had appreciated the true spirit of Islam, as enshrined in the Holy Quran, he should have written that the whole world is for all the creatures of God, since (in the words of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, quoted above, as a motto to a previous chapter) " the basic tenet of Islam is universal brotherhood, for God is not only our God, but

the God of one and all ". Contrast this highly spiritual ideal of Islam, and noble Islamic conception of God, with Iqbal's, as quoted in some of the previous chapters, the correctness of which is supported by the view expressed by a great scholar like Professor Sharif, who had summed up by saying that Iqbal's philosophy of religion had led him into " the pitfall of viewing everything anthropomorphically ", and " that both Ward and Iqbal have fallen into this pitfall ".

Leaving the chapters of philosophy and religion, and adverting to the domain of politics, one naturally thinks of Iqbal's ideal of Pakistan, which concerned itself mainly with the Muslim-majority areas of North-western India, and not (as is now urged by others) with similarly situated tracts in Eastern India. His scheme failed because he never placed before the public any details of his project which could be scrutinised as to whether it was at all, or to any extent, practicable. But it is interesting to contrast the views of Iqbal, and the other advocates of Pakistan, with that of the Rt Hon'ble L. S Amery, as expressed in his capacity as the Secretary of State for India, and now included by him in his *India and Freedom*. Says Mr. Amery :—" Once broken into separate independent entities India would relapse, as it did in the decline of the Moghal Empire, into a welter of contending powers, in which free institutions would inevitably be suppressed, and in which no one element would have the resources with which to defend itself against external attack whether by land or by sea. A complete break-up of Indian unity would be equally disastrous to both (Hindus and Muslims). From every element in India the watch-word ' India First ' demands comprehension, tolerance, compromise, acceptance of the real India as it exists to-day, not the uncompromising insistence upon the immediate and complete realisation of the theoretical India which any particular element or party



has inscribed upon its banner". "The complete severance from the rest of India of the north-western and north-eastern zones (in which Muslims constitute a majority) and their establishment as completely independent states controlling their own defence, foreign affairs and finance" involves, says Mr. Amery, "immense practical difficulties in the way of the so-called Pakistan project, stated in this its extreme form. Nor need I go back to the dismal record of India's history in the eighteenth century, or the disastrous experience of the Balkan peoples before our eyes, in order to point out the terrible dangers inherent in the break-up of the essential unity of India in its relation to the outside world, a unity of whose achievement we have every right to feel proud". "The demand from Muslim quarters for the complete breaking-up of India into separate Hindu and Muslim dominions", continues Mr. Amery, presents "manifold and, to my mind, insuperable objections to such a scheme, at any rate, in its extreme form. I would only note this, that it merely shifts the problem of permanent minorities to somewhat smaller areas, without solving it. It is a counsel of despair and, I believe, of wholly unnecessary despair". He sums up by declaring that "the practical arguments for unity are undoubtedly overwhelming" and "only in political unity, can India find peace and stability". Yet it was this "counsel of despair", and "wholly unnecessary despair", that Iqbal had pledged himself to—as President of the session of the Muslim League, held at Allahabad, in 1930—and the influence of which is so manifest in many of his poems, which are inspired by a spirit of separatism.

---

## CHAPTER XXV.

### Iqbal and Indo-Muslim Renaissance.

"Islam represents a great and definite contribution to world civilisation. It would be an undoubted gain to future understanding, in the world, if people who do not accept the creed of Islam will, at least, try to understand its history and contribution."

—The Hon'ble Sir Azizul Haque, in his address delivered, in 1912 at the India Society, London.

"The Holy Quran advocates equal respect for all religions. A Muslim must respect all the Prophets sent by God, from time to time, for the guidance of humanity. A Muslim is thus a Hindu, without being an idolator; a Christian, who believes in the prophethood of Jesus without calling him the son of God, a Jew who does not regard himself as belonging to the race of the chosen people; and a Zoroastrian, who worships Him, who created fire for the use of man. His religion literally means peace and submission to the will of Allah. He loves all, irrespective of caste and creed. I am afraid, a true Muslim is a rarity. The teachings of Islam are to-day honoured more in the breach than in practice, with the result that it has become very difficult to find a true representative of Islam."

—Miss Meherbanoo M. Visram B. A. (in her article on "The Spirit of Islam", contributed to *Onward*, an Allahabad weekly, in February, 1943).

"There is no organised movement of social reform, amongst the Mussalmans of India, on a scale sufficient to bring about their eradication. The Hindus have their social evils. But there is this relieving feature about them, namely, that some of them are conscious of their existence, and a few of them are actively agitating for their removal. The Muslims on the other hand, do not realise that they are evils, and consequently do not agitate for their removal. Indeed, they oppose any change in their existing practices."

—The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his *Pakistan : Or Partition of India* (second edition, 1945).

“ It is essential to remember that a part can only live, as a part of a living whole, and that the good of the part is ultimately comprised in the good of the whole. It should be the endeavour, nay, it is the duty of all lovers of India to cultivate that state of mind, and to create that atmosphere, which will strengthen the spirit of brotherhood in a country of diverse races and creeds. Fractional organization, however comprehensive, can represent only a passing phase in the life of a nation ; for as soon as we grow into freedom and responsibility, and with self-confidence regained, recognise the value of the saying that we men are brothers unto one another, they will lose all their significance and wither away.”

—Sir Mirza M. Ismail (at the opening of the 34th session of the Jat Mahasabha, at Jaipur, on the 10th May, 1946).

## II

In this chapter, I shall focus the discussions on the salient contentions urged in this book, with special reference to the effect of Iqbal's teachings on Indo-Muslim renaissance, which is stated to have been the poet's primary object in composing his poems. But before doing so, I may invite attention to some other relevant matters. It is believed by many that Iqbal's religious and philosophic conceptions were materially influenced by the writings of one of the greatest mystic Persian poets—namely Jalal-ud-deen Rumi. Iqbal himself confirms this belief by declaring in one of Persian poems :—

مرشد رومی حکیم پاک زاد  
سر مرگ و زندگی بر ما کشاد

“ The spiritual guide, Rumi, the holy philosopher, opened to us the secret of life and death ”.

Again, the poet says in another verse :—

پیر رومی خاک را اکسیر کرد

“ The old man of Room turned dust into elixir ”.

That is what Iqbal wrote and, I dare say, he also believed in it. But can it be accepted as at all correct that the poet was brought up in the school of thought of Rumi? Did not Rumi declare in his celebrated *Masnavi* that "all religions are in substance one and the same". Is there any trace of such a view to be found anywhere in the works of Iqbal—either in Persian, Urdu, or English? Take, again, the well known stanza in Rumi's collection of poems, popularly known as the *Diwan of Shams Tabrez* :—

خاندان خود اے صنم اندر دل ماکرد  
 یوں ویرانه ولے عرش معلیٰ کرد  
 ساختی مومن کسے را کرد کافر کسے  
 رخنہ ها انداختی خود فتنه بر پا کرد

"O, my Beloved, now that you have made your home in my heart, you have transported it to the Exalted Throne of the Almighty from what was but wilderness before. But O' Beloved it is You who have created some people as 'the faithful' (Muslims), and others as 'infidels' (non-Muslim unbelievers) and thereby brought about in this world all the trouble, and wrought all the mischief".

Now, if this he technically regarded as anthropomorphism, is it not of a highly exalted type, as compared with Iqbal's anthropomorphic sentiments quoted in previous chapters? In the case of Rumi the seeming anthropomorphism is distinctly on the surface, and, read between the lines, the stanza, which is an apostrophe to God for poetical purposes, is permeated through and through with the highest form of mystical transcendence, which is in striking contrast with the anthropomorphism exhibited by Iqbal. Nor is Urdu poetry devoid of broad-minded philosophic poets, whose poems express the combined immanence and transcendence of God as inculcated in the Quran, as correctly interpreted by liberal-minded thinkers, and not as expounded by dogmatists. I have quoted in an earlier chapter some verses of the

celebrated Urdu poet, Ameer Meenaie, as expressing the immanent-transcendent ideal in the Islamic conception of God. I may quote another well-known Urdu poet, Zauq, who was the *ustad* (teacher) of the last titular Indo-Moghal Emperor, Bahadur Shah :—

میں ہوں وہ خشت کہیں مدت سے اس ویرانے میں  
 برسوں مسجد میں رہا برسوں رہا بتخانہ میں  
 ایک پتھر ہو جانے کو شیخ جی کہہ گئے  
 ذوق ہر شے لائق ہوسا ہے اس بتخانہ میں

"I am that old brick (or that chip of the old block) that abode long periods amidst ruinous wilderness, and lived for years both in the mosque and in the temple. The Shaikh had gone to kiss the one stone enshrined in the Kaaba (at Mecca) ; but, O Zouq, in this temple (of the universe) every idol (or every creature, of God) is worth loving".

### III

All such poems, whether in Persian or Urdu, as express higher thoughts and philosophic concepts manifest a broad-mindedness and freedom from dogmatism, such as one scarcely meets in the works of Iqbal, who is invariably reminding his readers that "though I have been brought up in the temple of idols, (referring to his Brahmin ancestry) my lips have uttered what is within the heart of Kaaba"—that is in the tenets of Islam as Iqbal understood them. Again he reminds us in other Persian verses :—

اگرچہ زادہ ہندم فروغ چشم من است  
 زخاک پاک بکھارہ و کابل و تبریز  
 مرا بندہ کہ در ہندوستان دیگر نامی بینی  
 برہمن زادہ رمز آشنائی روم و تبریز است

"Although I was born in India my eye is illumined with the sacred dust of Bokhara, Kahul and Tabrez. Look

at me, for you will not see another like me in Hindustan — one of Brabmin descent, but conversant with the secrets of Room and Tabrez ”.

So with Iqbal it is all of “abroad”, and nothing of “at home”. It may be all to the good ; but what about his knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the civilisation, culture, and humanism of the land of his birth ? Did he seek to understand, and appreciate, them also, along with those of Bokhara, Kabul, Tahrez and Room ? It is one of the contentions of this thesis that Iqbal is not a sound and faithful interpreter of the Quranic Islam, but—in spite of his pretension to the verses quoted above—an expositor of its illiberal dogmatism, as developed later by dogmatic exegetes. This is conclusively evidenced by his constant insistence on the distinction between *kufir* and *iman*, Muslim and non-Muslim, idol-worshipper and non-idol-worshipper, mosque and temple, and other things of that kind. In other words, he had trained his mind to see more of the differences of humanity, in matters relating to religion, rather than their fundamental oneness and essential unity—a very serious defect, indeed, in a messagist or philosopher, aspiring to teach humanity. \*

Contrast the views of Iqbal, on what he called idol-worship with those of Akbar's famous Minister, Abul Fazl, a scholar of great distinction, and author of the celebrated historic work, *Ajzen-e-Akbari*. Here is that savant's estimate of the religion and religious practices of the Hindus, a perusal of which should remove the inherent prejudice in the average Muslim mind against Hinduism. Writes Abul Fazl :—“ They one and all believe in the unity of the Godhead, and although they hold images in high veneration, yet they are by no means idolaters, as the ignorant suppose. I have myself frequently discoursed upon the subject with many learned and upright men of this religion, and comprehend their doctrine, which is,

that the images are only representations, to whom they turn themselves, whilst at prayer, to prevent their thoughts from wandering ; and they think it an indispensable duty to address the Deity after that manner. Without compliment, there are to be found in this religion men who have not their equal in any other for their godliness, and their abstinence from sensual gratifications ". While such is the appraisal of Hindnism by Ahul Fazl, the references to this highly philosophic religion, in the works of Iqbal are generally indifferent, and even at places contemptuous, as " the religion of idolaters ". It may be something to be proud of that one of Brahmin descent so steeped himself in foreign culture as to claim to know the " secrets of Room and Tahriz " (that is of Turkey and Persia), but he would have had greater cause to feel proud if he had mastered the secrets of the culture and civilisation of his own country first, and tried to be its faithful interpreter. " For what doth it profit man if he gaineth the whole world, and loseth his own soul ? "

#### IV

I have quoted as a motto to one of the preceding chapters the declaration of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan to the effect that " the teachings of Islam have not been placed before my non-Muslim countrymen in their true perspective ". That is absolutely correct, in spite of the several volumes of verse and prose written by Iqbal and others. Islam has suffered a great deal in India by reason of its highly spiritual ideals being sought to be promulgated by conquerors, warriors, and administrators, rather than popularised by liberal-minded and enlightened expositors, like those whom I have quoted in this book. This point is well established by history, and Professor Muhammad Habib in his *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni* thus records his views : — " Its Islam's early successes were really due to its character as a revolutionary force against religions that

had lost their hold on the minds of the people, and against social and political systems that were grinding down the lower classes. Under such circumstances the victory of Islam was considered by the conquered populations as something intrinsically desirable ; it ended the regime of an aristocratic priesthood and a decrepit monarchy, while the doctrine of equality first preached in the Eastern world, opened a career to the talent of the depressed masses, and resulted in a wholesale conversion of the populations of Arabia, Syria, Persia, and Iraq. Now Hinduism, with its intense and living faith, was something quite unlike the Zoroastrianism of Persia, and the Christianity of Asia Minor, which had so easily succumbed before the (Arab) invader ; it suffered from no deep seated internal disease ; and a peculiarity of the national character of the Hindus, ' deeply seated in them and manifest to everybody ', was their intense satisfaction and pride in their customs. People with this insularity of outlook were not likely to lend their ears to a new message. But the policy of Mahmud (of Ghazni), secured the rejection of Islam without a hearing ". Fifteen years after Mahmud's death, adds Professor Habib, " east of Lahore no trace of the Mussulmans remained " ; and " Mahmud's victories, while they failed to shake the moral confidence of Hinduism, own an everlasting infamy for his faith ".

Islam has secured since Mahmud's time not only a large number of adherents to its rank from amongst Hindus, but also contributed substantially to the development of Indian culture in various important spheres of life and activities. Yet the fact remains that by reason of the majority of the expositors being dogmatists (of whom Iqbal was perhaps the most famous in the twentieth century), their interpretations of it have not appealed—as admitted by Sir Sikandar—to the vast bulk of the advanced and philosophically-inclined Hindus, as evidenced by the fact



that more than twelve centuries after the first appearance of Islam as a conquering force in Sindh, in 711, there is but one Muslim to three non-Muslims in the population of this country. Various causes have been assigned by theologians and historians for this state of things in India, as compared with what happened in other countries of Asia from Afghanistan westwards. For instance, Dr. M. T. Titus—an American scholar, who had long resided in Northern India—in his authoritative book, called *Indian Islam*, which is a religious history of Islam in India, expresses the view that "so far as conversion of India, as a whole, is concerned, Islam signally failed"; having "accomplished so little in proportion to the total population". He goes on to say: "India may have more Muslims than any other country, but India is not a Muslim country". "The only conclusion, therefore, that one can reach as to why the attempt to Islamise India was thus only partially successful", says Dr. Titus, "is that the Hindus were so well organised in their social and religious life that comparatively little could be effected towards the overthrow of their religion".

The view so emphatically expressed by Dr. Titus supports the opinion of Professor Habib, which I have quoted above. At the same time, quite apart from the effect and influence of the innate strength of Hinduism, and its well-organised religious and social life to which Professor Habib and Dr. Titus both bear testimony) it is nonetheless my settled conviction that no less contributory a cause to the comparatively slow expansion of Islam in India has been that it has never been presented to the non-Muslims (in the words of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan) "in a true perspective". There are no doubt some exceptions to this general statement. In Arabic Alberuni's *India*, and in Persian Abul Fazl's *Ain-e-Akbari* and Mohsin Fani's *Dabistan-e-Mazahib*, and possibly some others, are works of outstanding merit, which present Islam to Hindus and Hinduism to Muslims "in a true perspective". But,

speaking broadly, the Indo-Muslim literature in Persian is heavily tainted with intense prejudices against the Hindus—their religion, customs and manners—and though evidently written with the wrong idea of thereby exalting Islam, it naturally produced on the non-Muslim readers the very opposite effect. No one familiar with Indo-Muslim literature can challenge the correctness of this statement.

It is a historic truth that all great religions have suffered, and have been discredited, by the unjustifiable zeal of their bigoted followers, and Islam has been no exception to this universal rule. In fact, as correctly stated by Professor Habib, "Islam's worst enemies have been its own fanatical followers". He goes on to say that "as a religion is naturally judged by the character of those who believe in it, their faults and their virtues are supposed to be the effect of their creed". He sums up by stating that "it was inevitable that the Hindus should consider Islam a deviation from truth when its followers deviated so deplorably from the path of rectitude and justice". The only explanation of this regrettable aspect of Indo-Muslim history is the fact that as correctly put by Professor Habib "Islam, like all other religions, has been differently conceived by different people at different times". All this bears out strongly my contention that the true spirit of Islam—which is as intensely spiritual as that of any other great religion—has not had till now fair play, and has not been presented by its expositors, as a rule, "in a true perspective" to the non-Muslims. Hence Sir Sikandar Hayat's appeal to his co-religionists "to promote feelings of tolerance and good will towards the sister communities in accordance with the true spirit of Islam"—an appeal which one would vainly hope may not even now fall on deaf ears.

## V

I shall now deal specifically with an aspect of Indo-

Muslim renaissance which merits fairly detailed discussion — and it is Iqbal's influence on the social progress of Indian Muslims. An Allahabad weekly—*Onward*—printed in November, 1942, a striking article by Professor Zubair Siddiqui, of the Allahabad University, which began by referring to "the immense social progress" made, during the last fifty years, by the Hindus. It was only through social progress, he added, that the Hindus had been able to advance in other spheres as well. He wrote: "I do not grudge their progress. I only want the Mussalmans to learn a lesson from it. Hinduism is an essentially conservative religion: Islam, on the other hand, is an enlightened and progressive brotherhood. If the Hindus can introduce drastic and far-reaching reforms in their society, there is no reason why we, Mussalmans, should not be able to revolutionise the very structure of our present society."

It is not Professor Siddiqui alone who had taken the view that, during the last half a century, Hindus had made comparatively greater social progress than the Muslims in India. In his *Plan of Muslim Educational Reform* Mr. F K Khan Durrani—a vigorous exponent of the two-nation theory in India—had expressed himself as follows:—"Less than fifty years ago, the Hindu was meek and timid. To-day all this is changed. National consciousness has created in the Hindu a sense of pride. He is no longer timid. The Hindu of fifty years ago knew little of public charity. His charity was of the religious kind. Charity of this kind is now growing less and less among the Hindus. But in public charity they have become as generous as any other people on earth. The motive of charity has also changed. The motive is now national good, and not the individual's salvation in the hereafter. Or one might say rather that the individual now sees his spiritual salvation in the service of his people rather than in the enrichment of Brahmans and Sadhus. There has grown

up in them (Hindus a sense of national cohesion which they never knew before. National consciousness has changed their whole character, social usages, and even religious conceptions, and the change has taken place before our very eyes. The people who looked upon them with contempt only yesterday, now respect them and fear them. The rigours of the caste system are giving way, and a Hindu nation is evolving right in front of our eyes."

Mr. Durrani then contrasts the progress made by the Indian Muslims, in comparison with Hindus, as follows :—

"There have been reform movements in Islam, and they all failed." Writing with specific reference to the reform movement known as "Wahabism", he states his conviction as follows :—"The corruptions and innovations were removed from among those who accepted the reformer's message ; but otherwise Muslim society remained as it had been ; and the decay continued," and he asserts that Wahabism "as a life giving, revivalist, revolutionary, dynamic force, died long ago." He proceeds to say that "its failure has, indeed, been so complete, that the present-day Indian followers of this revivalist movement, Wahabism, which once shook the world of Islam so violently, either keep away from, or lend but lukewarm support to, the one movement in India, which stands for the political integrity of the Muslims, namely, the All-India Muslim League." He sums up his conclusion in the following terms :—"Muslims have to go a long way yet to catch up with the Hindus"

One need not quarrel either with Professor Siddiqui about his estimate of Hinduism as "essentially conservative" ; and of Islam as "an enlightened and progressive brotherhood", or with Mr. Durrani for his view of the Hindus of fifty years back. But if the people following the "essentially conservative" religion had made (as the writers themselves admitted) greater social progress than the Indian Muslims, surely it is due to the fact that its votaries not only

interpret Hinduism in the light of reason rather than of dogmatism, but also act up to their reasoned convictions. It is because of this fact that social reform, among Hindus, had made greater progress, during the last half a century, than among the Indian Mnslims. The advance made by Hindus was undoubtedly due to the emancipation of their religious thought from the shackles of dogmatism, with the result that those who originally controlled the social *status quo* among Hindus had receded into the background, and the leaders in the fore-front of the present progressive school are rationalists—deriving their inspiration from the spirit rather than the letter of their scriptures. Conservatism is not necessarily synonymous with dogmatism or reactionaryism, and no advance can be said to be enduring without a solid basis such as Hinduism demands as the criteria of all social progress. Leaders of progressive thought among Hindus, since the time of Ram Mohan Roy, have all appealed to the light of reason, and interpreted their "essentially conservative" religion as rationalists. Not only Ram Mohan Roy, the reformer *par excellence*, but Rama Krishna, the God-intoxicated ascetic, and his devoted disciple, Vivekananda, the brilliant exponent (of American fame) of Neo-Hinduism, were rationalists; and so was also Dayananda—the founder of Arya Samaj. Though rather orthodox compared with the others, Dayananda too interpreted Hinduism, on such liberal lines as had made the sect he founded one of the most progressive in the matter of social reform; while Mr. Justice Ranado—who led the social reform movement, for years—was a pronounced rationalist.

No movement, worth the name, for the liberal interpretation of Islam, on progressive lines—such as Turkey and Iran had developed—has yet arisen in India; and it is one of the contentions of this thesis that, far from contributing to social reform and progress, Iqbal applied his talents to the

exposition of Islam on traditional and dogmatic lines, with the result that the average Indian Muslim is yet far behind in his social outlook as compared with the peoples not only of Turkey and Iran, but even of Egypt, and some other Muslim countries. The social reforms, which Professor Siddiqui urgently advocated among Indian Muslims, were practically the same as those sought to be introduced by Hindu reformers. His list shows that Hindus and Muslims share in common numerous limitations and deficiencies due to their social backwardness. These obviously afford a common platform on which the two communities can work in co-operation, and forge ahead in social progress. In this respect the All India Women's Conference movement—in which Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Parsee women work harmoniously on highly progressive lines—has set a striking example to men, and should be followed by them. Weightier words on this subject of supreme importance, to Hindus and Muslims alike, had not been uttered than those by Mr. Justice Ranade, in the course of the memorable address delivered by him at the session of the Social Conference, held at Lucknow, in 1899. Thus spoke that great social reformer :—“ Both Hindus and Mussalmans have their work cut out in this struggle (for social progress). In the backwardness of female education ; in seclusion of women, in the disposition to over-leap the bounds of their own religion ; in matters of temperance ; in their internal dissensions ; in the indulgence of impure speech, thought, and action, on occasions when they are disposed to enjoy themselves ; in the abuses of many customs in regard to unequal and polygamous marriages, and in their desire to be extravagant in expenditure on such occasions ; in the neglect of regulated charity ; in the decay of public spirit ; in insisting on the proper management of endowments—in these, and other matters, both communities are equal sinners, and there is thus much ground for improvement

on common lines. But without co operation, and conjoint action of all communities, success is not possible."

The list given by Mr. Justice Ranade, though it is illustrative rather than exhaustive, is sufficient to establish the case for joint work in many spheres of social activities, on a common platform, by Hindus and Muslims, if only the leaders of the latter will bring to bear upon their task as undogmatic a frame of mind as do the Hindu social reformers. The views expressed by Mr. Justice Ranade, in 1899, still hold good, to a large extent, and require conjoint action of all social workers. They received confirmation, in 1948, in an address delivered by Mr. S M. Abdullah—one of the great leaders of the Muslims of Kashmir. Said he:— "Hindus and Muslims, in spite of many differences, constitute only one nation. In all walks of life they are a single entity. To deny this is to deny what is a most apparent and a most manifest truth". But in this great struggle for joint social progress—which is so essential to the advancement of both Muslims and Hindus—Iqbal did not care to lend a helping hand by attempting to fire the imagination of his readers, through the medium of his poetry, in which any reference to this all-important subject is conspicuous by its absence. The more is the pity, that instead of doing so he should have concerned himself with the development of a new type of superman—neither Islamic, nor Indian, in his ideals, but a curious amalgamation, compounded of heterogeneous elements, incapable of realisation in this work-a-day world. In reply to a question, put to the leader of the Turkish Press Delegation, he said:—"For the salvation and independence of a country it is essential, in these days, that its people should develop positivist, scientific thinking". Now, "positivist scientific thinking," is but another name for rationalism, which Turkey had adopted, as opposed to dogmatism which she had discarded, but which unfortunately still obtains very

largely among the people of India—though perhaps in a larger measure among the Muslims than among the Hindus.

## VI

Having discussed, in the previous section, Iqbal's failure to exert any healthy or progressive influence on the advancement of social reform amongst that section of the Indian Muslims who could read the poet's works in Persian or Urdu, I may now advert to the effect of Iqbal's poems on freedom of thought and liberalisation of the mind and spirit among Indian Muslims. The reader, who has followed the discussions in this book so far, will not be surprised at the statement that the poet's works, far from lifting the mind of their readers to the higher plane of freedom of thought and liberalisation of spirit, tend to shackle it even more firmly than ever to the plank of creedalism, dogmatism and formalism, all of which are the very antithesis of liberalism, progressivism and rationalism. I have quoted in a previous chapter Iqbal's frank confession that, in his opinion, "freedom of thought is the invention of the Devil" (*azadi e-afkar hai iblis ki ijad*), and also the passage from his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, where in dealing with the progress of Turkey, and its political advancement, under the influence of Ataturk Kamal, on lines of secular nationalism, Iqbal deprecated it because of his apprehension that it might disintegrate the conventions and traditions, which were associated in the poet's mind with his conservative interpretation of Islam. I have discussed his views at some length, and contended that it was Iqbal's interpretation of Islam that was at fault, and not at all the Quranic Islam itself, which (according to my interpretation of that noble and sublime religion) has inherent in it elements of as progressive an advancement on rational lines, as any other religion. Be that as it may, it is obvious that, holding the views he did, there could be no room in the works of Iqbal for the liberalisation of the



human mind, and its freednm from the shackles of dogmatism, which are conditions precedent to progress, in all spheres of activities.

We have seen in the previona section, that according to the authority of Dr. Zuhair Siddiqui, the Indian Muslims have not advanced socially to the same extent as the Hindus ; although, in the words of that writer, Hinduism is " an essentially conservative religion ", as compared with Islam, which " is an enlightened and progressive brotherhood ". Assuming the premises to be correct, what then is the explanation of that which Dr. Siddiqui characterised as " the immense social progress " made by the Hindus, who had introduced " drastic and far-reaching reforms in their society ", through which they " had been able to advance in other spheres as well " ? Is it not the fact that with all their conservatism, the educated Hindus, under the influence of the teachings of their leaders and reformers, had developed a state of mind liberal in its outlook, progressive in its perspective, and free from the trammels of dogmatism and ritualism ? It means that in spite of their attschment to the text of their creed, they had developed a spirit which would not permit any interpretation of their religion, or religious observances and practices, to stand in the way nf their advancement and progress towards a state nf society, better adapted to the requirements of the ever-changing conditions in this world. In other words—though, of course, not to the same extent as Kaimalist Turkey—a large section of the Hindus had now come to develop, and are rapidly developing, in a larger and larger measure, that spirit which the leader of the Turkish Press Delegatinn stated to be the characteristic of his country tn-day, and which " did not hesitate to cut itself free frnm even the strongest traditional influences, when it was a question of executing social and administrative reforms, judged to be necessary in the

interest of the nation, with a liberty free from all restraint and coercion". It is this spirit of adapting themselves to the ever-changing conditions in Life and Universe that had enabled several sections of modern Hindus to make that progress not only in social reform, but also in other spheres of activities, which Dr. Zubair Siddiqoi rightly holds up to the emulation of the Indian Muslims. It is the contention of this thesis that for the development of such a spirit of adaptation to environment, Iqbal failed to give the necessary stimulus to his Indo-Muslim readers, for whose uplift he devoted himself in composing his poems. This contention is based on the data and facts which I have already placed before the readers of this book, on which they can form their opinions on the question under discussion.

## VII

I shall now advert to Iqbal's contributions to the political progress of India, in general, and of the Indian Muslims, in particular. Credit must be given to him for having composed a nationalist and patriotic song—the well-known *tarana*, called *Hindustan Hamara*—which is adapted to the requirements of a national anthem for India, in a larger measure perhaps than any other Indian poem known to me. But here again, and soon enough, Iqbal superseded it, so to say, by composing another poem to claim the whole world (to say nothing of China, Arabia and India only) as the homeland of Muslims, thus leaving all non-Muslims to their Fate. Apart from the *Hindustan Hamara* song, scarcely anything in his works can be placed to the credit of Iqbal, so far as furthering the politico-social progress of India is concerned, unless it be his theory of Pakistan for the Muslim-majority areas situated in the north-west of India. In regard to the soundness of this theory of his, I have already quoted the very striking observations of none other than the Rt. Hon'ble L. S.

Amery, showing its utter untenability and impracticability. I shall not pursue the matter further, as it has become, since Iqbal's death, in 1938, a subject of acute political controversy, and a discussion of which, as such, is beyond the purview and scope of this book, which is concerned mainly with Iqbal as a poet, or, at any rate, as a poet-philosopher, and not as a politician, or political leader, which he never claimed to be.

Turning, therefore, from Iqbal's contributions to India's political progress, there remains to be considered his general political theory of "Back to Early Islamic Constitution"—which obtained under the regime of the early Arab Caliphs. This theory has been adequately discussed in an earlier chapter—headed "Iqbal's Political Background"—in the light of the observations made upon its soundness by Mr. Sarwar, one of the admirers of Iqbal, who sums up his view, which is highly adverse to the poet's contention, in the memorable terms "new generations require new methods to work out their salvation"—thereby throwing Iqbal's theory overboard. But, unfortunately, comparatively few sections of Muslims in India appreciate even now the truth of Mr. Sarwar's declaration about "new methods" being essential for their progress—which is but a paraphrase of the American poet Lowell's dictum that "new occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth". The advanced sections amongst Hindus have now come to appreciate and act upto this view under the influence of the progressive forces introduced by British rule in this country. But that influence has yet permeated among Muslim individuals only—from many of whom I have quoted in this book—and also small numbers, but not large sections, to say nothing of the community, as a whole. Proofs in support of this contention are apparent daily to those who watch carefully current Indian affairs, in general, and Indo-Muslim

affairs, in particular. Perhaps the latest proof that may be cited was the appearance (in the year of grace, 1943) of a book in Urdu, called *History of Islamic Thought and Politics* by Mr. Abdnl Wahid Khan. In regard to the contents of this book—written by an Indian Muslim educated in England, and well versed in the Urdu and English literatures—I cannot do better than reproduce *verbatim* the fairly long review of it, which appeared in the columns of the *Statesman*—a British-owned and British-edited newspaper, which is not likely to deviate from a fair and impartial estimate of the book, by reason of any communal prepossessions, or prejudices. Writes the *Statesman's* reviewer as follows :—

“ In this well-sized Urdu book, of 593 pages, based mainly on Urdu translations of few Arabic books, and on the works of some important Urdu writers of the 19th and the 20th centuries (like Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, Shibli Numani, Abul Kalam Azad, Inayatullah Mashriqi, and, above all, the great thinker and poet, of the Punjab, Sir Muhammad Iqbal), the author has attempted to explain Islamic ideology, and the cause of the failure of the Islamic State. In his conclusion he suggests that, to remedy present political and social evils, the New Order must adopt the ideology and principles put forward by Islam, and followed by Muslims during the early period of their history. The main ideal of Islam, according to the author, is the establishment of Theocracy ; everything else is a means to this end. It was attained by the Prophet of Islam, and followed by his immediate successors. But soon non-Islamic influences began to assert themselves and, gradually pervading the thoughts and activities of Muslims, undermined the original Islamic ideology. The Quran was interpreted in the light of Greek philosophy and Persian ideology. The traditions and stories of the Jews were incorporated in the mass of the sayings of Muhammad.

The selfless ideal lives and activities of the early Muslims were interpreted, and worked up, according to theories and practices of the Christian, Persian, and Indian mystics. Thus the theocratic State, in which the Caliphs and the common Muslim of the street, the rich and the poor, the masters and the slaves, lived and worked for the sake of one another, and for good of humanity, without prejudice of race, caste, or colour, was completely disorganised. The different races and sects and sub-sects waged wars against one another, and thereby brought about their own ruin, together with that of their opponents. The world to-day, it is argued, is suffering from the same disease from which the Muslims suffered. Various remedies have been proposed. Modern democracy is already recognised to have failed. Communism and dictatorship are also bound to fail, for both of them ignore the rights of the individual, and treat man as a soulless machine. The only possible panacea is to adopt and popularise genuine Islamic ideology. The author claims that Islam, with its legal as well as its religious sanction, gives due weight to the weaknesses and wants, and inherent rights and duties, of the individual, and also to those of society, always making the former subordinate to the latter. It declares peace to be the greatest boon, and those who disturb it to be offenders against whom mankind must rise as one man. Mr. Khan deserves credit for having made the best use of his sources ”.

And so there it is—the same twice-told tale, the same old ideal to be harked back to centuries after its disappearance from the world, the same wrong and untenable diagnosis for its failure (by reason of its contact with Greek philosophy and Christian, Persian and Indian mystics, and other non-Islamic influences), the same misappreciation of the law of progress, namely, the capacity in an individual or a people for constant adaptation to an ever changing

environment, the same revulsion to step out of the narrow groove of an unscientific mentality, and last but not least the same hankering after a retrocession to a past which can never be called back—all of which are quite familiar to students of Iqbal's poems. Now I shall be sorry if any reader of this book ran away with the idea that I desire to convey that it is the vast majority of Indian Muslims only who suffer from the obsession of reverting to the conditions of life that obtained in certain parts of the world more than ten centuries back. In retaining such an impracticable ideal, and in attempting to see it realised in their own life, large sections of Hindus are not far behind their Muslim fellow-countrymen. It is because such an unrealisable ideal is cherished by a very large number of the people in this country—Hindus and Muslims alike—that its progress has been so slow till now, compared with that of the countries of the West. The great impelling cause of the progress of Western peoples is discontent not only with their present, but also with much of their past. It is their constant search after knowledge, and the constant readiness to accept a better state of things, whenever that is discovered and appreciated, that has made the Western nations what they are, the rulers of the world.

But the immoderate reverencers of the past—Hindu and Muslim alike—who hug the corpse of the dead and gone past with extreme fondness, vainly try to throw the cycle-hand of the world's chronometer hundreds, if not thousands, of years back. They have become incapable of realising that the builders of the Egyptian pyramids would sooner rise from their crumpling sarcophagi to make railways and telegraphs, and to instal electricity and radio in the service of humanity, than a retrocession to the Vedic life in India, or the theocratic rule of early Caliphate, for which large sections of Indians are still yearning, would revive the

glory of Hindus or Muslims. They do not yet appreciate that the past is dead and gone ; and to try to revert to the past is to desire, though it may be unconsciously, to be dead. They have yet to learn that just as the past has been the builder of the present, so the present shall be the builder of the future. Woe betide him, therefore, who would attempt to thwart the law of progress by clinging to that which is past and gone. The fate of all laggards-behind in this inexorable onward march will soon overtake him, which is destruction. Since the dawn of history many a people had met such a catastrophic fate, and, but for the extenuating circumstance of both Hindus and Muslims being possessed of, and endowed with, a high order of intellectuality and spirituality, such a fate would have overtaken the people of India. So far as the material condition, the economic development and the industrial expansion go, the present state of the Western nations will be our future perhaps centuries hence. But if, instead of making rapid strides in forging ahead to regain the lost ground, we choose to retrogress to a dead-and-gone past, then the race for life would be hopelessly lost, for the obvious reason that the present is nearer to the future than to the past.

### VIII

Thus while it is true both of Indian Muslims and Hindus that their mentality is yet in a considerable measure, more or less, mediæval and not modern, the fact remains that of these two great communities, it is the " conservative " Hindu that is more progressive (paradoxical as it may sound) than the " enlightened " Muslim—to employ the terms used by Dr. Siddiqui. In the India of to day it is the Hindu, who has more keenly realised than his Muslim compatriot the essential unity of life, and its manifold activities, and has applied himself to interpreting his religion on lines conducive to the progress of his community in social reform and general advancement.

There is absolutely no reason why Islam in India should not have thrown up from its ranks equally, if not even more, liberal interpreters of their admittedly progressive religion, but the fact remains that until now it has produced far more supporters of dogmatism than of liberalism ; which is rather disappointing. Mr. Syed Abdul Aziz - ex - Minister of Education in Bihar and Orissa - in the course of his Convocation address delivered by him at the Aligarh University, in 1943, expressed his views about the ideal and purpose of Hindnism and Islam in the following terms :—“ The end of all service, according to Hindú philosophy, if I have understood it rightly, is the realisation of the unity of all things that exist, and the highest ideal of culture is self-discipline and self realisation, enabling one to further the universal life of which one is an integral part. The Islamic conception of man's mission is also the same. The brotherhood of man, and the realisation of unity in diversity, are the cardinal principles of our faith as preached by our Propbet (peace be on him !), and taught by Islamic saints, mystics, poets, and philosophers ”. This is a fair and impartial estimate of the common ideals and aspirations of Hinduism and Islam. But though there are, fortunately for the country, many individual Muslims who, like Mr. Aziz, had interpreted their religion on liberal lines, the vast majority of Indian Muslims, and also of Hindns, still remain under the influence of dogmatic exegesis, with the inevitable consequence that their mind, in its working in the religious sphere, continues to be cribbed, cabined and confined.

In this particular respect the advanced sections of Hindus have gone ahead, and they have produced some interpreters of their religion who have imparted a new strength and vitality to Hinduism, and enabled it to contend successfully against the modern forces in the world to-day. One such broad-minded expositor of Hinduism



was Ramakrishna, on the 107th anniversary of whose birth-day (in March, 1913), perhaps the most widely circulated newspaper in India—the Anglo-Indian daily, the *Statesman*—printed the following remarkable editorial, under the heading “ Sri Ramakrishna ” :—“ To day 107 years ago was born in a Bengal village a man who has revolutionised Hindu religious thought. Sri Ramakrishna, as he is now known the world over, enunciated that all religions are equally true, thus solving the problem of centuries in a phrase. He proved this truth by subjecting himself to the various spiritual disciplines enjoined by Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. In a small room, in the temple at Dakshineswar, where he lived and preached this gospel of catholicity—which has caught the imagination of people far beyond India’s shores—he used to keep a picture of Christ side by side with those of Hindu deities. ‘ Bow down ’, he used to say, ‘ where others kneel, for where so many have worshipped, the Lord manifests Himself ’ ! The Hindu devotee sees in him an incarnation of God, the partisan feels that he satisfies all parties and conflicts with none, the philosopher finds in him the living embodiment of the Vedanta. The beauty of his teachings (recorded with Boswellian faithfulness and veracity) is that he expounded intricate spiritual problems in such a simple way that they appealed to the scholar and the unlettered alike. Sri Ramakrishna was not merely a person ; he was a new ideal. His teachings represent a high water-mark of India’s spiritual greatness ”. This just and glowing tribute by a British-edited journal to a liberal interpreter of Hinduism, should make every friend and admirer of Islam wish that some equally broad-minded and catholic expositor of that great, noble, and sublime religion also, would interpret it in such liberal terms as would (to adopt the language of the *Statesman*) revolutionize Muslim thought in India, and solve the problem of

centuries in a phrase ; some one who would not only be a person but a new ideal, who by his well-reasoned exegesis would relieve it of the effect of dogma, and the result of the teachings of dogmatists.

The *Statesman* returned to the same subject, one year later, on the occasion of the celebration of the eighty-second anniversary of the birthday of Ramakrishna's most famous disciple. It wrote on that occasion, in 1944: "Swami Vivekananda, the great exponent of Hindu religion and philosophy, towers above all those whom India had sent abroad with her spiritual message. The secret of his success was perhaps that he combined the spiritual qualities of an ancient *rishi* with the intellect of a modern scholar. He had read deep into Western philosophy, and knew his *Bible* and the *Imitation of Christ* as well as his *Geeta* and the *Upanishads*. Swami Vivekananda gave India a new spirit and a new life. His message to this country, and the world, embodied not only a re-appraisal of Indian spiritual values, but also the special fire of his own personality. He was not conservative and orthodox. Indeed, he advocated reform in the many spheres of Indian life — but not merely by pulling down the existing structure and building it anew. According to the Vedanta, God is in every human being. This was the belief on which his teachings rested. They are being steadily disseminated by the Mission he founded, in the name of his Master, Ramakrishna. The Mission aims at fostering fellowship among all religions, and giving succour to the sick, the destitute and the poor, irrespective of their caste and creed, or nationality. The late Dr. Rabindranath Tagore told Moos. Roméo Rolland, when they met at Geneva : 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive, nothing negative'. It would thus be seen what great importance a leading Anglo-Indian journal, of the high position of *Statesman*, attached to the beneficent

and beneficial results which had accrued to the Hindu society from the preachings and teachings of Vivekananda, and his Master, Ramakrishna. And the view expressed by the *Statesman* that modern Hindu society had gained substantially by the influence exerted on it by such liberal and progressive thinkers as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda was absolutely correct.

It has been to non-Muslim well-wishers of their Muslim fellow-countrymen, in India, a matter of profound disappointment, and genuine regret, that the latter had not produced in recent times any great reformer, whose activities had been influenced by the progressive elements enshrined in Islam. I am, therefore, naturally gratified to find that the ice had been at last broken by Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in a striking pronouncement, made at Aligarh, in 1944, which was a whole-hearted denunciation of the *purdah* (forced seclusion of women), and an emphatic assertion of the importance to a people's greatness depending on the high status accorded to women, in society. He said ; " Another very important matter which I wish to impress on you is that no nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you. We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity, that our women are shut up within the four walls of their houses as prisoners. I do not mean that we should imitate the evils of Western life. But let us try to raise the status of our women according to our own Islamic ideas and standard. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable conditions in which our women have to live. You should take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life, avoiding the corrupt practices of Western society. You cannot expect a woman who is herself ignorant to bring up your children properly. The woman has the power to bring up children on right lines. Let us not throw away this asset ". In speaking as he did, Mr. Jinnah spoke as a great social reformer, not only of the

Indo-Muslim community, but of all the other Indian communities I had long waited for some such vigorous pronouncement from a Muslim leader against *purdah*, and polygamy, and the rest of it ; including the customs and conventions which keep women in India from taking their due share (namely, an equal share) with men, in almost all public activities, duties and responsibilities. I am gratified at the lead given by Mr. Jinnah, and hope other Muslim leaders also will do the same.

### IX

Speaking broadly of the people of this country, it cannot be asserted, of either Hindus or Muslims, that a large majority of the members of either community have yet grasped that stern reality—the inevitable, universal, and supreme law of continuous adjustment, and constant adaptation to environment, as the essential and fundamental factor in human progress, which operates not only in the physical but also in the ethical world. But as pointed out by so eminent an authority as the late Sir James Frazer, "the old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable, and the modern scientific view is that the moral law is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change and perpetual flux". He emphasised that if we contemplate the diversities, the inconsistencies, and the contradictions of the ethical ideas and practices, not merely of different peoples in different countries, but of the same people in the same country in different ages, we shall be able to realise that the foundations of morality itself are not eternally fixed, but have constantly changed and are changing, from time to time. If they seem to us permanent, it is, because we do not extend our view beyond the narrow limits of our time and country, and also because the rate of change is generally so slow that it is imperceptible at any moment. Such a comparison, if carefully made, would convince us

that if we speak of the moral law as immutable and eternal, it can only be in the relative or figurative sense, in which we apply the same terms to the great mountains in comparison with the short-lived generation of men. But geologists tell us that the mountains too are changing, though we do not perceive the change, and this great scientific truth had found expression, in the English literature of the 19th century, in a beautiful and well-known stanza in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. In fact, it is now a scientific axiom that *nothing* is stable or abiding under the sun, and that this world has never been in a state of being but always of that of becoming, and we can as little arrest Nature's process of change in the moral or material world as we can stay the sweep of the tides, or obstruct the curso of the stars.

It is thus quite clear that our duty is to take advantage of this great law of life, and to so shape our ideas, conduct, and destiny that by acting in consonance with it, we may subserve the great end of nature—namely the progress of humanity from lower to higher forms and states. Practically the same conception of human progress is embodied in the soul-stirring words of a great American poet :

New times demand new measures and new men ;  
 The world advances and in time outgrows  
 The laws that in our father's day were best :  
 The time is ripe and rotten-ripe, for change :  
 Then let it come ; I have no dread of what  
 Is called for by the instinct of mankind,  
 Nor think I that God's world would fall apart  
 Because we tear a parchment more or less ;  
 Truth is eternal ; but her effluence  
 With endless change, is fitted to the hour ;  
 Her mirror is turned forward, to reflect  
 The promise of the future, not the past.

But this law of progress is in open conflict with the theory of retrocession, be it to Vedic India, or to the early

Caliphate in Arabia. It is for want of appreciation of this obvious fact that both Hindus and Muslims had retrogressed enormously in the race of life, and remain floundering where they are. Until not long back the Hindus were obsessed with the 'retrocession to Vedic India' theory, mainly under the influence of foreign, and not unoften uncritical, admirers of their religion and philosophy; but they have lately discarded it in practice (while still paying lip-homage to it), which accounts for their recent progress in various spheres of activities. But not so, unfortunately, a large majority of Indian Muslims, who are still wedded to the retrocession to the early Caliphate theory, without realising its utter impracticability in the world now-a-days, heedless of what has already taken place in our own times even in Muslim countries like Turkey, Persia, and Egypt, and oblivious of the world forces operating under the influence of the law of progress. It is for this reason that well-wishers of Indian Muslims, in particular, are bound to take exception to a great deal in the teachings of Iqbal, while giving him due credit not only for his great intellectuality and moral fervour, but also for his having been actuated by the best of intentions. But to recall the famous quatrain from Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* :—

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,  
 Moves on : nor all your piety, nor wit,  
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
 Nor all your tears wash out a word of it,

## X

On the subject under discussion — the law of progress — the following remarkable and striking observations are most apposite :—“ Let us make no fuss that any secular laws are unchangeable, that they are as eternal as the spiritual laws. Man to-day stands in relation to his Maker as he stood on the day when creation began. Not so, however, in regard to his social, economic, and political setting; the setting undergoes variation, the external picture tends

to be varied and kaleidoscopic. In so far as he has to cope with this setting man has often to adjust his equipments. Humanity needs occasional alterations, and adjustment of laws, to regulate its secular behaviour. Our aim and endeavour, therefore, should be to apply the true Hindu spiritual outlook to the task of keeping the Hindu society to move on with the march of time. It is not foreign to that culture, if we attempt to blend stability with movement, eternal truth with external evolution. Humanity is amove; that is no figure of speech. Its foot-fall is echoing all over, let it by no means be said of us that we heeded not the sound of advancing nations, and prevented India from going out on this high road. Let it not be complained by posterity that we held back the hands of the clock at a most eventful hour, and failed to lead India to join in the great march of equity, equality and emancipation". The above memorable words, enunciating sound principles of progress, are those of Sir Sultan Ahmed, the then Law Member of the Government of India, in introducing a Bill (to amend the Hindu Law) in the Indian Legislative Assembly, in March, 1943. They are memorable because they lay down scientifically accurate criteria by which to regulate human life, if humanity is to continue to make progress by constant adaptation to its environment in an ever-changing world, and not perish by reason of atrophy or stagnation, owing to its misconceiving the right lines of advancement. In fact, the contentions raised by me in this chapter may be said to have been well summed up in Sir Sultan Ahmed's highly eloquent peroration, quoted above *Dealing prima facie* with the reform of Law—but one branch of Sociology, and that too of but one, though an immensely numerous, Indian community—Sir Sultan's observations are marked by prescience of high order, and are, as happily put by him, of universal application, not excluding Muslims, and more particularly those of India. It is because the Indian

Muslims have neglected till now to proceed on the lines indicated by Sir Sultan Ahmed, that they are still backward in many spheres of activities, not only as compared with their co-religionists of the advanced countries, like Turkey and Persia, but even with the progressive sections of the Hindus, in spite of the innate conservatism of the latter.

And my grievance against Iqbal, as a poet, is that though composing didactic poems, he—instead of giving the right lead to his people, Muslims and Hindus alike (for a true poet belongs to no particular community, so far as his productions are concerned)—took a line which resulted in indurating the mind of his admirers and votaries against progress, on proper lines or ways, which are so clearly indicated in Sir Sultan Ahmed's highly stimulating words, quoted above, and which form a most suitable summing-up of the contentions raised and discussed in this chapter, in particular, and this book, in general. If any further authoritative opinion, from a European source, were desired I would refer to that wide-visioned poet—Tennyson. Weightier words, on the subject under discussion, have not been written than by Tennyson, in the following stanzas, in his famous poems called *Locksley Hall* ; and *Locksley Hall ; Sixty Years After* :—

Yet I doubt not thru' the ages one increasing purpose  
runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of  
the suns  
Not in vain the distance beacons, Forward, forward,  
let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing  
grooves of change.  
Thru' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger  
day ;  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.



Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time  
will swerve,

Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward stream-  
ing curve.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours  
or mine.

Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is  
Divine.

## XI

All great scriptures aim at uplifting mankind from the animal state to the seat of the Divine, by unfolding the steps of ascent to the highest place of perfection. But while that is so, all cultured and enlightened votaries of a faith should realise that in this world of perpetual and unending change, the accidental, even when embodied in the scriptures, must be eliminated, and only the permanent elements retained, if humanity is to progress towards the ideal state. An eminent philosophical writer, Professor D S. Sarma, lucidly expounds this view—in his book called *Krishana and his Song* which is a commentary on the *Bhagwad Geeta*—as follows :—“ The messengers of God come in human form. They belong to a certain age, a certain society, and a certain country. Therefore, their spiritual message is inevitably covered with the husk of ideas of their times. And it is the task of the wise man to separate the husk from the kernel. He should clearly see, and frankly admit, that belief in a particular doctrine, or a particular social order, is the perishable part of a scripture. It is the husk that covers the living seed. Half the degradations that flourish under the name of religion are due to our frequent inability to separate what is permanent from what is temporary, or accidental in our scriptures”. It is precisely the same view that is expressed by the Hon'ble Dr Syed Ameer Ali, with special reference to Islam, in the passages quoted below from his famous book,

*The Spirit of Islam*, which merit careful consideration by Muslims :—" The Prophet had consecrated reason as the highest and noblest function of the human intellect. Our schoolmen and their servile followers have made its exercise a sin and a crime. As among Christians, so among Muslims. The lives and conduct of a large number of Muslims, at the present day, are governed less by the precepts and teachings of the Master, and more by the theories and opinions of the *mujtahids* and *imams* who have tried, each according to his light, to construe the revelations vouchsafed to the Teacher ". In other words, they prefer to live upon the unnutritious husk rather than the nourishing kernel—to use the apt and expressive metaphorical terms of Professor Sarma. Having enunciated the principle, Dr. Ameer Ali applies it to the present-day Muslims in the following terms :—" With regard to the sumptuary regulations, precepts, and prohibitions of Mohamamad, it must be remembered that they were called forth by the temporary circumstances of the times and people. With the disappearance of such circumstances, the need for these laws had also disappeared. To suppose, therefore, that every Islamic precept is necessarily immutable, is to do an injustice to history and the development of the human intellect ".

Dr. Ameer Ali continues :—" The Muslims of the present-day have ignored the spirit in a hopeless love for the letter. Instead of living up to the ideal preached by the Master, instead of striving ' to excel in good works ', ' of being righteous ', instead of loving God, and for the sake of His love loving His creatures—they have made themselves the slaves of opportunism and outward observance. It was natural that in their reverence and admiration for the Teacher, his early disciples should stereotype his ordinary mode of life, crystallise the passing incidents of a chequered career, imprint on the heart orders, rules and regulations enunciated for the common exigencies of the day in an

infant society. But to suppose that the greatest Reformer the world has ever produced, the greatest upholder of the sovereignty of Reason, the man who proclaimed that the universe was governed and guided by law and order, and that the law of nature meant progressive development, ever contemplated that even those injunctions which were called forth by the passing necessities of a semi-civilised people should become immutable to the end of the world, is doing an injustice to the Prophet of Islam". These are hard words, but they are evidently not unwarranted, if considered in the light of the circumstances set forth by the talented writer, and the present condition of the vast bulk of Muslims—particularly in India—which had called forth so strong an expression of opinion from Dr. Ameer Ali. The learned expounder of Islam then goes on to observe :—"The great Teacher, who was fully conscious of the exigencies of his own times, and the requirements of the people with whom he had to deal—a people sunk in a slough of social and moral despond—with his keen insight and breadth of views, perceived, and one may say foretold, that a time would come when the accidental and temporary regulations would have to be differentiated from the permanent and general. 'Ye are in an age', he declared, 'in which, if ye abandon one-tenth of what is ordered, ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who shall observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be redeemed". These words—as quoted by Dr. Ameer Ali—clearly indicate the prescience and the innate and profound wisdom of the Prophet (on whom be peace).

I make no apology for making these fairly lengthy extracts from the most famous work of one of the most cultured and enlightened Muslim expositors of Islam in modern India ; nor for quoting some further extracts from his book :—"As we have already observed"—writes he—"the blight which has fallen on Musulman nations is not

due to the teachings of the Master. No religion contained greater promise of development, no faith was purer, or more in conformity with the progressive demands of humanity. The present stagnation of the Muslim communities is principally due to the notion which has fixed itself on the minds of the generality of Muslims, that the right to the exercise of private judgment ceased with the early legists, that its exercise in modern times is sinful, and that a Muslim in order to be regarded as an orthodox follower of Muhammad should belong to one or the other of the schools established by the schoolmen of Islam, and abandon his judgment absolutely to the interpretations of men who lived in the ninth century, and could have no conception of the necessities of the twentieth. And hence it is that most of the rules and regulations which govern now the conscience of so many professors of the faith are hardly derived from any express and positive declarations of the Quran, but for the most part from the lego-religious books with which the Islamic world was flooded in the later centuries. "Just as the Hebrews deposed their Pentateuch in favour of the Talmud," justly observes an English writer, "so the Muslims have abolished the Quran in favour of the traditions and decisions of the learned". 'We do not mean to say' he adds most pertinently, 'that any Mohammedan if asked what was the text-book of his religion, would answer anything but the 'Quran'; but we do mean that practically it is not the Quran that guides his belief or practice. In precisely the same way modern Mohammedanism is construed, and a large part of what Muslims now believe and practice is not to be found in the Quran at all' —concludes Dr. Ameer Ali.

Any comments of mine on this learned and luminous exposition of the reasons for the decline and fall of many of the Muslim nations, by perhaps the most famous Indo-Muslim scholar and distinguished historian of Islam, of

modern times, would be an act of supererogation. It is all so lucidly put, so logical in its deductions, and so impartial in its verdict, that it requires no elucidation whatsoever. To all who are open-minded it will carry conviction without any further elaboration. The only point that may be stressed is the divergence in the opinions between Ameer Ali, the historian, and Iqbal, the poet—the former attributing the downfall of the Muslim nations, and their political and cultural deterioration, to the installation of dogmatism by the dethronement of Reason, in the interpretation of the Quran, and the latter to the alleged influence on Muslims of the Mysticism of Plato and the sufism of Hafiz. On the basis of the unimpeachable materials, brought together in this book, no fair-minded reader can have any serious difficulty in coming to a correct conclusion. Suffice it to say, that both Hinduism and Islam have suffered, and are still suffering, by reason of the behind-the-times mentality of the vast majority of their votaries, in holding to the letter of the law and not following its spirit, and thus forgetting the very sound advice tendered by Tennyson :—

That man is the true Conservative  
Who lops the mouldered branch away.

---

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### Iqbal and Humanism.

" If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power, and beauty that Nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India. India had its place in history, and in what is the very life of history, the history of the human mind. And in that study of the history of the human mind, in that study of ourselves, of our true selves, India occupies a place second to no other country. Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be laws or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere, you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India, and in India only. True there are many things which India has to learn from us ; but there are other things, and in one sense, very important things, which we too may learn from India."

—Max Muller (*India : What Can It Teach Us ?*)

" If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days, when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

—Romain Rolland, (quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Discovery of India*).

“ Thinkers, like other people, are in no small measure rooted in time and place. The forms, in which they cast their ideas, are largely moulded by the habits of thought and action which they found around them. Great minds make individual contributions to the thought of their age ; but they do not and cannot altogether transcend the age in which they live. They do not cease to belong to their age even when they are rising most above it.”

—Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (in his *Gautama : The Buddha*).

“ Ho (Shivaji) made it a rule that, whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to mosques, to the Book of God, or to any one's women. Whenever a copy of the Holy Qoran came into his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Muslim followers. When the women of my Hindu, or Muslim, were taken prisoners by his men and they had no friend to protect them, he watched over them till their relations came to buy them their liberty.”

From the *History of India*, (written in Persian by Kafi Khan, the Court Historian of Aurangzeb).

“ Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,

Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,

Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ;

If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these”

—The New Testament (Philippians, IV-8).

## II

The latest development in the study of Iqbal's works, by some of his admirers, had given rise to a new phase, which may be called “ Iqbal as a Humanist ”. During recent celebrations of “ Iqbal Day ”—the date of the anniversary of the poet's death—speeches were made by some of the poet's admirers in which stress was laid not

so much on Iqbal's work as a poet, or a philosopher, or a poet-philosopher, as on Iqbal as a humanist. It is, therefore, desirable that this latest development also should be discussed, though briefly, in this concluding chapter of this work, which is concerned with Iqbal as a poet or messagist in its ramifications. Of the many who have, in recent years, expressed themselves on the subject of Iqbal as a humanist perhaps the most notable, and the most representative, is Dr. Syed Latif, who is a distinguished scholar, and from whose excellent work, called *The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*, I have quoted in some of the earlier chapters of this book. In that book—though Iqbal is discussed at some length as a poet—no reference is made to his humanism. This is obviously a later development in the outlook of Dr. Latif—a fact which he himself had declared, in the course of his address delivered, at Hyderabad, on the occasion of the celebration of the "Iqbal Day", in April, 1948. Having quoted Dr. Latif in support of some contentions of mine, it is but fair that I should also quote, at some length, from his latest discussion of what he would call Iqbal's humanism. The relevant and salient passages embodying Dr. Latif's views on this subject, I reproduce below :—"Iqbal stands for all that is beautiful in life and holy, and of good report : and he is anxious to see the world fashion itself out under its living inspiration. He wants to see human life take a stand on its own human dignity, and set itself free from narrow tribal, racial, class, or territorial temptations, and evolve a brotherhood extending to the ends of the earth which, howsoever distributed into groups by the exigencies of time and space, should hold together a common moral consciousness, and be linked to each other by the ties of common humanity. That is the Order that he would like to see established on earth, and to which he has dedicated all his Muse. Iqbal's



humanism is a matter of conviction to him. As a student of world history he has been inspired by humanistic movements throughout the ages. His writings reveal the influences of classic humanism of the West, glowing in the course of history into Christian impulses ; they reveal also the influences of the humanism of India, and even of ancient Iran. But the humanism that has captured his mind and soul is the humanism of the Semitic land, standing midway between the East and the West, the humanism which has given to the world a Christ and a Muhammad, a humanism that brushes aside all barriers of colour, and race, and country, that stand in the way of the fullest fellowship between man and man throughout the globe. It is under the searchlight of this humanism that he looks at the world and ponders over its problems."

I have quoted above the fairly long passage to enable the reader to appreciate the position taken up by Dr. Abdul Latif who—of all those who have spoken or written on the subject of Iqbal's humanism—is by far the ablest exponent of that view. But it would be noticed, in the passage quoted above, that (while referring to the influences which operated on Iqbal as a humanist) Dr. Latif has the fairness to admit that "the humanism that has captured his (Iqbal's) mind and soul is the humanism of the Semitic land"—"the humanism which has given to the world a Christ and a Muhammad". This by itself is rather a *significant admission* that, of the wide world, Iqbal's "mind and soul" had been captured only by "the humanism of the Semitic land", and not by that of such culturally ancient countries as China, Persia, and India—though the two latter are incidentally mentioned. But that apart, and confining oneself to the humanism of only the "Semitic land", one is bound to be struck with the studious omission of any reference to the great cultural influences emanating from the Jewish prophets, from Moses downwards, covering not a short period but centuries and centuries. Surely, the

first emanation of Semitic humanism is not to be found in the teachings of Jesus, but in those of Moses, and his successors, the record of whose injunction is embodied in the Jewish Scriptures, popularly known as the *Old Testament*. Centuries before the Almighty revealed Himself to humanity in the person of Jesus, He had vouchsafed to Moses not only the Pisgah Sight, but also the Divine Effulgence, on the top of Mount Sinai. As an Urdu poet had well put it :

خدا کی دین کا موسیٰ سے بوجھتے احوال  
کہ آگ لینے کو جائیں پیسبری مل جائے

"Ask Moses of the Almighty's graciousness in bestowing upon him the boon of His Divine Effulgence, when he (Moses) had but gone to fetch fire, and received the gift of Prophethood."

### III

In the New Testament itself there are pretty frequent references to the prophecies, sayings and traditions embodied in the *Old Testament* ; and Jesus himself appeals to them, from time to time. That being so, if an Indian poet is to draw inspiration for his humanism from that of the "Semitic land" it is but reasonable to expect that he should go first of all to the very fountain head—namely, the humanism embodied in the *Old Testament*. Nor can it be reasonably urged that the Jews being a dead-and-gone race, and their humanistic culture being extinct, it may now safely be ignored. The Jews, though now scattered over many lands, are still a potent influence in the affairs of the world—a fact that cannot be denied by any one familiar with current events and incidents, to say nothing of their commanding position in the cultural history of mankind. But that is not all. So far as culture and humanism are concerned, there is a school of Western thinkers who have maintained all these years—and the literature on the

subject, in various European languages, is fairly extensive—that not only Christianity, but also Islam, have drawn some of their essential teachings from those embodied in the *Old Testament*. Suffice it to say that a consideration of the humanism of the "Semitic land", without the great and important part played in its moulding and development by the Jewish prophets, and Judaism, is like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet's part left out. All these patent facts could not be unknown to a scholar of Dr. Latif's distinction, but evidently finding no indication in Iqbal's works of the effect of Jewish humanism, he thought it perhaps unnecessary to refer to this vitally important aspect of the humanism of the "Semitic land".

For the same reason the reference made by Dr. Latif to the influence on Iqbal's humanism of the preachings of the Lord Jesus Christ seems to me to be irrelevant, since it cannot be asserted with any regard for accuracy that the teachings of the Master had produced any effect on Iqbal's humanism, judging from the fact that in the poet's works, any indication of it is conspicuous by its absence in them. But all that apart, it cannot be stated with any regard to truth that the teachings of Jesus—exalted, sublime, and idealistic as they undoubtedly are—have been so interpreted and practised by his followers, at any time in the history of Christianity, as to have brushed aside "all barriers of colour, and race, and country". The credit for having done that in actual practice, in this work-a-day world, can be justly awarded to the teachings of only two great religions—Buddhism and Islam, and to no others. And even these two religions—Buddhism and Islam—had not yet succeeded in obliterating all barriers among human beings, in so far as the influence of "country" is concerned. One need not go further than the Sino-Japanese war, in the twentieth century, to realize that Buddhism, while brushing aside barriers of race and colour, had not

succeeded in doing the same in regard to " country " ; while Islam, though entitled to credit, in the largest measure, for its having obliterated all distinctions of race and colour, had also failed, till now, to do the same in regard to distinctions arising from the influence of country, a subject which is fully discussed in the previous chapters of this book.

Nor is it all. " Hindnism is said to divide people, and in contrast Islam is said to bind people together. This is only a half-truth. For Islam divides as inexorably as it binds. Islam is a close corporation, and the distinction that it makes between Muslims and Non-Muslims is a very real, very positive, and very alienating distinction. The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is a brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity." These are the words of the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (in his book called *Pakistan : or Partition of India*), and I have quoted them to show how a non-Muslim of Dr. Ambedkar's great intellectuality, deep learning, and wide experience of sociological conditions in India, had been impressed by the attitude, mentality, ideals, and practices of the Muslims in this country. Dr. Ambedkar's opinion cannot be brushed aside as that of an anti-Muslim bigot, since it is not long that he publicly announced that Islam was one of the great religions that he had been carefully studying among those which he considered fit for being embraced not only by him personally, but also his followers amongst the scheduled castes, popularly known as Harijans. It cannot, therefore, be urged reasonably that Dr. Ambedkar is hostile to Islam. For my part, he had erred in confusing between Quranic Islam—as interpreted by me—and the Islam of

the vast majority of Indian Muslims. But, making allowance for the confusion into which Dr. Ambedkar seems to have fallen, his criticism of Islam as practised by the vast majority of its votaries in India cannot be impeached or set aside. A similar view, expressed by Mr. Charles Andrews, is quoted by me, in an earlier chapter, and both the statements would show that though Islam had succeeded, to a large extent, in obliterating distinctions based on race and colour amongst Muslims, it had not succeeded in India in doing the same between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Eliminating, therefore, the effect of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ on the "mind and soul" of Iqbal, we are left to the conclusion that the influences which moulded the humanism of the poet were not so much of the "Semitic land" as but purely Arabian and Islamic. But this is not an inference based on mere deduction from the facts mentioned above. It is categorically stated to be so by Dr. Latif himself, in the passage I quote below, from his address :—"His (Iqbal's) faith, therefore, holds anchor in the humanism he identified with Islam; and even when he looks at the condition of those who are the recipients of this heritage, viz., the Mussalmans of Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and Iran, he fails to see that humanism existing in their midst in any striking form. The European sense of nationalism has cast its snare so powerfully all round that, he fears, it may racialize even *their* outlook. But Iqbal does not fall into despair. He believes that the Islamic humanism is still a living force and will work for freeing the outlook of man from geographical limitations". Now what do these admissions made by Dr. Latif amount to, if not that (a) Iqbal's "faith holds anchor in the humanism he identifies with Islam"—and with no other Semitic religion (Judaism or Christianity); (b) that even "this heritage" as practised in the

Muslim countries enumerated by Dr. Latif, is not utilised by their peoples "in any striking form" (that is, not according to Iqbal's interpretation of the "heritage"); (c) that far from the obliteration of a sense of "country" amongst the Islamic peoples, "the European sense of nationalism has cast its snare so powerfully all round that it may racialize even *their* outlook"—in proof whereof witness Turkey and Persia, the conditions of which are discussed at some length in the previous chapters of this book; and (d) Iqbal's hope that "Islamic humanism" may still free "the outlook of man from geographical limitations"? What is at all new in all these declarations of Dr. Latif, as pertaining to Iqbal's humanism, but what has been dealt with at considerable length in this volume, in connection with Iqbal's intellectual background, and his religious and philosophical views as expressed in his poems? Stripped of the philosophic garb in which Dr. Latif had dressed the humanism of Iqbal, it is no more or less than what had been asserted by the poet's numerous admirers themselves, which was categorically stated by Mr. Anwar Beg and Mr. Akbar Ali, in their books, respectively, and may be quoted, once again, with advantage:—"He despised nationalism. He was the arch-priest of pan-Islamism. His strong religious sense compelled him to see things through Muslim eyes". Thus Mr. Anwar Beg. "The objects that inspire him (Iqbal) always create in him moods, associations, and suggestions that are all connected with Islam and Muslim culture". Thus Mr. Akbar Ali. Such extracts could easily be multiplied from the writings of Iqbal's sympathetic interpreters, and not from those of his so-called cavilling critics. Some of them are quoted in this book in the previous chapters. In the result, I submit that the contention about Iqbal's humanism, in the true sense of the term, is obviously untenable in the light of the facts stated above. The sum and substance

of the discussion thus is that what is now being designated 'Iqbal's humanism, and offered as a new aspect of his teaching, is nothing more or less than what I have been discussing, sifting, and scrutinising throughout this book.

#### IV

The next relevant question is whether anything can be said even to approach "humanism", if it is based on, or derived from, only one particular land, race, religion, philosophical system, or any other source, be it Semitic, or Aryan, Arabian or Indian, Hindu or Muslim, or theism or atheism? Does not the very term "humanism" clearly imply that it is something above any particular land, religion, race, colour, or culture? Does it not mean—as the most authoritative English dictionary (The Oxford) defines it as a "system concerned with human interests, or with human race"? And can this definition be said to be satisfied, when Dr. Latif (as in the case of Iqbal) "identifies" the notion and spirit of the poet's humanism with one particular land or creed, as if the culture of that land, or the particular creed evolved in it, and humanism were interchangeable or synonymous terms? Surely, to have persuaded himself to a particular conviction, belief, or "faith"—which is the word used by Dr. Latif of Iqbal—cannot alter the irrefutable fact that the identification of "humanism" with a particular creed, dogma, or "faith", is obviously a contradiction in terms.

A most valuable and highly illuminating contribution to the study of the essentials of Humanism, was made in 1944, in the course of radio talk (printed in the *Listener*) by Dr. Gilbert Murray—one of the most erudite and famous classical scholars in Britain—and the whole of it will repay careful study. But as it is not possible to reprint its full text in this place, I shall quote some short passages from it—as a brilliant exposition by a master of the subject. Said Dr. Murray:—"Words ending in 'ism' are treacher-

ous things. Their meaning is never quite clear. I understand Humanism as a special interest in human, or humane things—that is in the spirit of man in the special sense in which Man shows himself higher than the animals ; and, indeed, with all his horrible imperfections, the highest being yet evolved on earth. He is certainly that ; and still more important (as Dr. Huxley has shown us) he is the only being which seems to have definitely the will, and the capacity, to rise to something higher still. The subject may be treated broadly from the biological point of view ; man as the highest product of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. Or it can be treated in the light of human history and literature, seeing how Man has behaved, and what things he has sought for in the times of which we have record. As a guide to life then we have the whole experience of the human race in its search for good life. The humanist accepts, as his essential business, Man and Man's welfare, and his unknown high possibilities". This scientific and critical exposition of the fundamental elements of Humanism obviously excludes altogether its association—to say nothing of its identification—with any particular land, race, tribe, clan, caste, creed, faith, or even any particular culture—its scope and object being as wide as Humanity itself ; wholly irrespective of regionalism, racialism, tribalism, clannism, and even of cultism, creedalism and ritualism.

Much light is thrown on this point by the observations made by an eminent Indian scholar, in the course of two interesting lectures, delivered by him at Hyderabad, and printed in that high-class Quarterly—"Muslim Culture"—in its issue of April, 1943. Dr. Irach Taraporevala (of Bombay) in his lectures, on (i) "The Language and Literary History of pre-Islamic Iran", and (ii) "The Main Currents of pre-Islamic Iranian Thought", thus elucidated the fundamental differences in the outlook of the Aryan and the Semitic



mind, with special reference to the interpretation of religion—  
 “Iranians wanted Islam to be interpreted very differently from what the orthodox Arabs did. Besides this growing and narrow orthodoxy, there was also the racial pride of the Arabs who, as conquerors, were inclined to look down upon all Iranians, whether Muslims or not, as altogether inferior to themselves. These causes tended to a very sharp division between the Arab and the Iranian within a very few years of the conquest”. Again, discussing the influence of Iran on Islamic thought, he continued:—“It was the preponderant Iranian influence at Baghdad that ushered in the era of toleration and freedom of belief. The real inspiration during this period came from the Mutazilia school of thought. A careful study of Sufi teaching reveals striking similarities with both the Greek and the Indian doctrines, and there is also a considerable lot which can be taken as the continuation of Zoroastrian teaching”.

The view expressed above, by Dr. Taraporevala, in regard to the Iranian interpretation of Islam, which I have already discussed in previous chapters, was confirmed, in the course of an address on “Persian View of Life and Islam”, delivered in 1943, by that well-known scholar, Sir Abdnl Qadir, in a broadcast from Delhi. He said:—“It is surprising that a country, which was among the earliest to come under the influence of Islam, successfully resisted the rigid austerity of some of its doctrines. The historical background of the people of Iran offers an explanation of this phenomenon. Iranians were naturally proud of their ancient genealogy, and of their old national heroes. They were also fond of their old manners and customs, and tried to retain as much of their culture as they could. They continued their love of painting and music, against the stricter tenets of orthodox Islam. They retained their national pride, and continued to celebrate the Zoroastrian festival of Nauroz, even after they became Muslims. Firdausi, the great

national poet of Iran, though a Muslim himself, devoted his world-renowned epic, the *Shahnameh*, to the deeds of Rustam and Sohrab, heroes of ancient Iran. This sentiment of national pride is still strong among the people of Iran." It is this Iranian reaction against orthodox Islam of the Arabs that is known as Shia-ism, which is the prevailing religion of Persia, and which exerted much healthy influence on Indian culture, both through the medium of Sufi literature enshrined in the Persian language, and also the policy of the Shia kingdoms, in South India, that had existed for some centuries, till the last of them was annexed to the Indo-Mughal empire, by Aurangzeb, in 1687. Their policy in dealing with their non-Muslim subjects was, on the whole, liberal and tolerant. That was, in fact, the ground urged by Aurangzeb for their otherwise unjustifiable annexation—that their kings were not "orthodox" and appointed Hindus even as their Prima Ministers. The North Indian Shia kingdom of Ondh—which, founded in the eighteenth century, existed till the middle of the nineteenth—was also "unorthodox" in the same sense, but was liberal in spirit and tolerant in its policy towards non-Muslims—thus proving the correctness of the contentions of Dr. Taraporevala and Sir Abdul Qadir.

According to this view of the Islamic history in Persia, humanism as manifested in the Shia-ism of Iran is not the same as that developed in other countries, under the influence of "orthodox Arabs", and their "narrow orthodoxy". Thus humanism, in its broadest and truest sense, is wholly independent of all boundaries of country, and limitations of race, colour or religion, and is no humanism, at all, if identified with either any one, or some, of them. It is not easy to explain in words this true sense of humanism, but it may be represented, for practical purposes, by the word "oneness". It is the complete disappearance of the sense of "otherness", followed

simultaneously with the unfoldment of such a spiritual conception as is beautifully and vividly delineated by none other than Iqbal's revered Master, Jalaluddin Rumi, in his verses quoted below :—

I am the dust in the sunlight, I am the ball of the sun,  
To the dust I say : " remain " ; and to the sun, " roll on " .  
I am the mist of morning. I am the breath of even,  
I am the rustling of the grove, the surging wave of the  
    sea.  
I am the mast, the rudder, the steerman, and the ship,  
I am the coral reef upon which it founders.  
I am the breath of the flute, the spirit of man,  
I am the chain of being, I am the soul in all.

That is what humanism really is, and that truly represents its spirit. It is to be discovered, by all seekers after truth, in the teachings and writings of the greatest of sages, in all countries and ages. But amongst the Islamic peoples it manifested itself more markedly in Iran than elsewhere, and in none more so in Iran than in Jalaluddin Rumi, from whom I have quoted above, and equally so in Hafiz. It would thus appear that the spirit of humanism is synonymous with universalism, which is wholly independent of " Semitic land ", or Aryan land, or any particular religion, or culture, or any other specific thing, or things. Jalaluddin Rumi points the same moral, as is emphasised in the verses quoted above in the following exquisite apologue : " There came one, and knocked at the door of the Beloved. And a voice answered, and asked ' Who is there ? ' The Lover replied, ' It is I '. ' Go hence ', returned the voice ; ' there is no room within for thee and me '. Then returned the Lover, and knocked, and again the voice demanded ' Who is there ? '. He answered : ' It is thou '. ' Enter ', said the voice, ' for I am within '. That is the true spirit of humanism, by whatsoever name it be called—Platonism, Sufism, or Vedantism, or any other.

And the question is whether such genuine humanism is to be found in the works of Iqbal.

Dr. Latif's own admission is that it is not to be found in Iqbal, since his humanism is not only identified with the "Semitic land", but also with one of the religions developed mainly in that land. I have indicated my views so clearly about the poet's humanism that I must be content with citing, in support of them, the great authority of Dr. Nicholson, who had expressed himself on this subject in the Introduction to his translation of Iqbal's *Asrar-e-Khudi* rendered by him, into English, as "The Secret of Self":—"He (Iqbal) is a religious enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a New Mecca, a world-wide theocratic, Utopian, state, in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one. When he speaks of religion he always means Islam. Non-Moslems are simply unbelievers, and (in theory, at any rate) the *Jihad* is justifiable, provided that it is waged 'for God's sake alone'. A free and independent Moslem fraternity, having the Kaaba as its centre, and knit together by love of Allah, and devotion to the Prophet—such is Iqbal's ideal. Notwithstanding that he explicitly denounces the idea of nationalism his admirers are already protesting that he does not mean what he says". Can this ideal, and the spirit underlying it, be justly called, by any stretch of language, as humanism? Or would it not be a travesty of the correct meaning of the term humanism to call Iqbal a humanist? Let every reader answer the question for himself.

## V

Hinduism is not a competitive religion, but is essentially a synthetic principle. Its conservatism is the outcome of its dread of the loss of any value which has ever been of any help or use anywhere, or at any time, to humanity. The humanism of Hinduism—though in essence and substance the same as that expounded by Jalal-ud-din Rumi—is cast,

however, in a different mould. While it bestrewn the Hindu scriptural literature, it appears in a most prominent form in that most popular of Hindu scripture—the *Bhagvad Geeta*, which is a poem, in the form of a dialogue. The interlocutors are Sri Krishna and Arjuna, representing God and man, respectively, and thus as a dialogue between God and man, on what the ancient Greeks called "the highest things in human life", it is one of the most famous, and most highly esteemed, scriptures in world-literature. I would extract a few passages concerning its teachings from Professor D.S.Sarma's book called *Krishna and his Song* : "Krishna points out that our conception of *dharma* should be organic, not mechanical. What is the difference? A clock is a mechanism, a tree is an organism. The former is lifeless, the latter is living. The former is fixed, the latter develops from within. Similarly *dharma* is mechanical when it consists only of fixed, unalterable, rules imposed by an external authority. It becomes organic when it grows according to the law of its own being, ever adjusting its means to its end". Having laid down the general principle inculcated by the Master, Professor Sarma proceeds to develop the point as follows :—"As it is, his (Sri Krishna's) teaching is valid for all time, and for all types of society. According to him every man should cultivate his own natural gifts, should be true to himself before he thinks of serving society. It is only then that he will be an efficient member of the community or an efficient servant of the Divine Master". It is thus "self realisation" that embodies in one single word the teaching of Lord Krishna as imparted to Arjuna. "Thus the *Bhagvad Geeta* is quite in accord with the most advanced educational theories of to-day, in holding that individuality is sacred and inviolable, and that all an educator has to do is to make the child discover his *svadharma*, and to allow him free play to develop along his own lines". It is in

conformity with the modern Montisouiri system, the most advanced of the modern educational systems.

Having explained the educational aspect of self-realisation, Professor Sarma turns to the spiritual aspects of the teachings of the *Geeta* : " God is not sitting idle in a remote heaven ; He has not renounced His activities. He is ever creating, ever destroying. Under His direction Nature is producing every moment innumerable forms of life. The sun shines, the wind blows, and the earth revolves. And in this world of warmth and light creatures breathe, and grow." This view of the Divinity and the Universe is essentially the same as that declared in some other religions, including Islam, which stresses strongly on law and order in the Universe. But the distinctive feature of the *Geeta* is thus emphasised by the writer :—" The practical lesson that Krishna draws from this mystery of God's being is that man also should work, and yet be unaffected by his work. He should find rest in work, and work in rest ". The non-Hindu student may possibly have some difficulty in appreciating the exact significance of the expression " be unaffected by his work ". It means " unconcerned with, or unattached to, the results of, or expectations from, one's work, or action ". Professor Sarma continues : " God, according to the *Geeta*, is both transcendent and immanent. His supreme abode is where ' the Sun does not shine, nor the moon ', yet all things in this universe are strung on Him ' as gems on a string '. Similarly He is both the supra-personal Absolute ' which does not perish when all beings perish ', and the personal Iswara who creates, protects and destroys all beings. He is both *nirguna* (unqualified) and *saguna* (qualified) ".

Hence the *Geeta* gives what Professor Sarma calls the antithetical description of God as revealed to mankind by *jnana* or spiritual wisdom—" I will now describe that which ought to be known, and by knowing which immortal-

ty is gained. It is the supreme Absolute who is without beginning, and who is neither being nor non-being". To quote the very text, on the subject :—" His hands and feet are everywhere. His eyes, head, and mouth, are facing in all directions. His ears are turned to all sides, and He exists enveloping all. He possesses the faculties of all the senses. He is unattached, and yet He sustains all things. He is free from the dispositions of Nature. He is without and within all beings. He has no movement, and yet He moves. He is too subtle to be known. He is far away, and yet He is near. He is undivided, and yet He is divided among beings. He generates, sustains, and also destroys all creation. The Light of all Lights, He is above darkness. As the object of knowledge, and the aim of knowledge, He is set firm in the hearts of all". This passage conveys the Hindu conception of the Divine—a fact testified to by Al-Bairuni and Abul Fazl, whose appreciations of Hinduism I have quoted in some of the previous chapters. It does not differ substantially, I submit, from the conception of the Divine as expressed in the Qnran, as interpreted by Jalal-ud-din Rumi, in the stanza quoted above.

## VI

Nor does it differ from that expressed by Tennyson in his famous poem—"The Ancient Sage". That poem purports to be an interview, that took place a thousand years before the birth of Christ, between an ancient sage and a rich, young, and gay, gallant, when the sage was about to retire to a mountain retreat for meditation. In reply to the youth's questions, tinged with the spirit of materialism, the sage gives the following highly spiritual reply :—

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and wilt dive  
 Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,  
 There, brooding by the central altar, thou

May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,  
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,  
 As if thou knowest thn' thou canst not know.  
 And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,  
 Nor understandest bound for boundlessness,  
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names,  
 And if the Nameless should withdraw from all,  
 Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world,  
 Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

In other words, and stripped of its poetic form, the sage points out that the world exists only through the immanently sustaining power of God, which can be contacted by delving into man's self (or *Atman*, in the language of Hindu philosophy), as affirmed all through in the scriptural literature of Hindus. As regards the further question as to what proof there is that this Power exists, the sage's highly thoughtful reply is as follows :—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,  
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,  
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one;  
 Thou canst not prove that thou art immortal, no;  
 Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my son,  
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,  
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
 Nor yet disproven; wherefore thou be wise,  
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith.

Thus in the magnificent lines, quoted above, the sage points out the utter futility of applying purely objective tests of proof to a subjective reality like the Absolute, and suggests approach through the medium of Hindu Advaitic philosophy. In reply to the Yonth's remark that man is a  
 'Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
 That moves, and all is gone'



the sage rejoins that

'But that one ripple on the boundless deep  
Feels that the deep is boundless, and itself  
Forever changing form, but evermore  
One with the boundless motion of the deep'.

In another famous poem of his—*Akbar's Dream*—Tennyson returned to the same theme, and put into the mouth of Akbar the following noble and idealistic sentiments :

There is light in all,  
And light with more or less of shade in all  
Man-modes of worship.  
Look how the living pulse of Allah beats thro' all His  
world

I let men worship as they will, I reap  
No revenue from the field of unbelief.  
I cull from every faith and race the best  
And bravest soul for counsellor and friend ;  
I loathe the very name of infidel.  
I can but lift the torch  
Of reason in the dusky cave of Life,  
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,  
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is  
And is not, what I gaze on—all else Form,  
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.  
And over all, the never-changing One  
And ever-changing Many, in praise of Whom  
The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,  
And vaguer voices of polytheism  
Make but one music, harmonising : 'pray'.

Such is the exposition of Akbar's humanism, as appreciated and depicted by a great English poet of the nineteenth century, who correctly interpreted the mind of that extraordinarily great ruler, in the lines quoted above. In one of the notes appended to the poem, Tennyson wrote

of Akbar :—“ His tolerance of religions, and his abhorrence of religious persecotioo, pot onr Tudors to shame.” Now Akbar’s hmanism—which wnnld “ let men worship as they will ”, which would “ reap no revenue from the field of unbelief ”, which enabled the Indo-Moghal Emperor to “ call from every faith and race the best and bravest soul for counsellor and friend ”, and which made him “ loathe the very name of infidel ”—was not confined to individuals but represented the Spirit of the Age, as is evidenced by a careful stody of the literature of that period. In the biography of Akbar’s friend, Abol Fazl, prefixed to his English translatioo of the *Aiyeen-e-Akbari*, Professor Blochmann quotes, as an iostance of the homanistic spirit of that Age, a remarkahle inscription composed by Abul Fazl, for a temple in Kashmir, which is a conolnsive proof of the great catholicity and tolerance which had come to infuse and inspire that memorahle epoch of Indian history :—

O God ! io every temple I see people that see Thee, and  
in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee.  
Infidelity and Islam feel after Thee ;  
Each religion says : ‘ Thou art One, without equal’.  
If it be a mosque people murmur Thy holy prayer, and  
If it be a temple, people ring the bell from love to  
Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the temple cloister, and sometimes  
the mosque.

But it is Thou whom I search from temple to temple.  
Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or ortho-  
doxy ; for neither of them stands behind the screen  
of Thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox ;  
But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the  
perfume seller.

I could add moch more on the subject of homanism in India, bot I have sought not to be exhaostive but illostrative.

What I have said concerning the humanistic spirit of Islam (as interpreted by the Maalana Jalal-ud-din Rumi), of that of Hinduism (as interpreted by the sage-poet who composed the *Bhagvad Geeta*), of Tennyson's eastern sage anpossed to have lived a thousand years before Christ, and Akbar (as interpreted by Tennyson) and, last but not least, the humanism of Akbar's period as expressed by that eminent thinker and historian, Abul Fazl, could leave no doubt in the reader's mind what true humanism is, and wherein it differs from the hamaism of Iqbal, as set forth by Dr. Abdnl Latif. In none of the expositions of humanistic spirit, which I have cited or quoted, is there the remotest references to any particular land, race, tribe, nationality, caste, community, colour, or age; for the simple reason that humanism, if it be of any worth, is absolutely independent of any or all of these—and, for the matter of that, of any other limitations. Is that the case with the humanism of Iqbal, which on Dr. Latif's own admissions is derived from the "Semitic land", and that too identified with one particular religion, as understood by the poet? I have placed before the reader ample data on which he can easily form his own judgment. I have no desire to snatch a verdict; but I may add that, in my opinion, Iqbal failed to realise the fundamental spirit of humanism, which is embodied by Browning—the most philosophic of English poets—in the stanza quoted below from his *Paracelsus* :—

Truth is within ourselves: it takes no rise  
From outward things, what'er you may believe.  
There is an inmost centre in us all,  
Where truth abides in fulness; and around,  
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.  
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
Binds it, and makes all error: and to know  
Rather consists in opening out a way

Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
 Than in effecting entry for a light  
 Supposed to be without.

## VII

In the above highly philosophic stanza, Browning strikes the note of true humanism—the poet being himself a great and genuine humanist. He justly declares that it is the realisation of the self within ourselves that produces the conviction about the Reality, in which the phenomenal diversities that we see around us disappear, merge into one another, and constitute one single unanalysable coherence and unity in which all distinctions cease to exist. The view expressed by Browning, in the passage quoted above—that “to know rather consists in opening out a way, whence the imprisoned splendour may escape, than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without”—represents the correct elucidation of the philosophic aphorism that “Truth is within ourselves”. And it is this that had been the cultural heritage of India, from the earliest recorded religious sentiments of the people inhabiting this country, till our own times. From the earliest religio-philosophic composition on the subject, the Vedic hymn on “Creation”, down to the Urdū poets of our day—the verses of some of whom I have quoted in the previous chapters—there is one long and continuous series of writers on the cultural unity of India, who have worked out a synthesis of the broadest and most catholic humanism that the world had produced. Let us start with the Vedic hymn, which may be taken to have been composed—at the lowest computation—about fifteen centuries before the Christian era :—

There was neither Aught nor Naught, nor air nor sky  
 beyond :

What covered all ? Where rested all ? In watery gulf  
 profound ?

Nor death was there, nor deathlessness, nor change  
 of night and day.

That One breathed calmly, self-sustained; nought else  
beyond it lay,

Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view.

That is how humanism began on the soil of India—the realisation of the Infinite Being, the Incomprehensible Mystery of all Mysteries, whom neither thought can at all approach, nor mind grasp. Thus judged, all seekers after Truth must appreciate the sublimity of the flight of imagination displayed by the Vedic poet, who sang wrapt in wonder, and tried to fathom the Unknowable. And can any poet or philosopher even to-day declare more explicitly anything about God than did the Indian poet of yore? Now that is the first effort at cultural humanism not only in India, but in the world. Later, came the "forest tracts", called the *Upanishads*, of which the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, wrote that, "in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads* which had been the solace of my life, and will be the solace of my death". Competent scholars believe that the poem now known as the *Bhagvad Geeta* was originally composed as an *Upanishad*, and it was later that, with certain requisite adaptations, it was incorporated, with a view to popularise it, in the great epic poem, the *Mahabharat*, where it still finds a place. As to the sublime teachings of the *Geeta* on humanism, I have quoted in an earlier section of this chapter, from the lucid exposition given of it by a distinguished philosophic writer. This old Indian humanism did not die out, but thrived as time passed; and on coming into contact, later, with the highest religious conceptions of Islam—as developed (in particular) in Persia, in Sufi literature—it produced great humanists of the true type, in various parts of the country. To confine oneself to Upper India only, this cultural humanism produced, among others, in the greatest Indian poet, who composed in Persian—viz, Ameer Khusrau—a humanist whose poetical works represent

the high-water mark of Indian humanism in the pre-Mughal period of Indian history. For want of space I may quote here but one famous stanza of Khusrav :-

من تو شدم تو من شدی  
 من تن شدم تو حان شدی  
 تا کس نه گوید بعد ازین  
 من دیگرم تو دیگری

(" I have become Thon and Thon hast become I, so that no one may henceforth say that I am distinct from Thee, and Thon from Me").

This well-developed humanism of the pre-Mughal period received a tremendous impetus, during the spacious days of Akbar, throughout the length and breadth of the country. Mr. Khaja Khan—a well-known South Indian scholar, and author of a series of highly stimulating books, in English, on Muslim philosophy and religion, as interpreted from the scientific standpoint—writes in his *Philosophy of Islam* : " Muslim philosophy in Southern India is so much mixed up with that of Hindus, that it is difficult to distinguish it ". As regards North India, in particular, so eminent a scholar as Dr. Bhagwan Das writes (in the course of an essay contributed by him to the Swami Dayananda Saraswati Commemoration Volume) :—" The natural and inevitable result of the historical processes was that Hindus and Muslims were constantly influencing each other, affecting and changing each other's ways of life, as neighbours in times of peace, and even in war, for both Hindus and Muslim soldiers were often to be found on each side ". The result of this great cultural fusion—alike in North India and South India—led to the establishment of a broad-based humanism, which came to appeal equally to the Hindu and the Muslim. In the seventeenth century its greatest exponent and apostle was Prince Dara Shikoh, the elder son of Shah Jahan, who paid the penalty with his

That One breathed calmly, self-sustained; naught else  
beyond it lay,

Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view.

That is how humanism began on the soil of India—the realisation of the Infinite Being, the Incomprehensible Mystery of all Mysteries, whom neither thought can at all approach, nor mind grasp. Thence judged, all seekers after Truth must appreciate the sublimity of the flight of imagination displayed by the Vedic poet, who sang wrapt in wonder, and tried to fathom the Unknowable. And can any poet or philosopher even to-day declare more explicitly anything about God than did the Indian poet of yore? Now that is the first effort at cultural humanism not only in India, but in the world. Later, came the "forest tracts", called the *Upanishads*, of which the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, wrote that, "in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads* which had been the solace of my life, and will be the solace of my death". Competent scholars believe that the poem now known as the *Bhagvad Geeta* was originally composed as an *Upanishad*, and it was later that, with certain requisite adaptations, it was incorporated, with a view to popularise it, in the great epic poem, the *Mahabharat*, where it still finds a place. As to the sublime teachings of the *Geeta* on humanism, I have quoted in an earlier section of this chapter, from the lucid exposition given of it by a distinguished philosophic writer. This old Indian humanism did not die out, but thrived as time passed; and on coming into contact, later, with the highest religious conceptions of Islam—as developed (in particular) in Persia, in Sufi literature—it produced great humanists of the true type, in various parts of the country. To confine oneself to Upper India only, this cultural humanism produced, among others, in the greatest Indian poet, who composed in Persian—viz, Ameer Khansrau—a humanist whose poetical works represent

the high-water mark of Indian humanism in the pre-Mughal period of Indian history. For want of space I may quote here but one famous stanza of Khamsrau :—

من تو شدم تو من شدی  
 من تن شدم تو جاں شدی  
 تا کس نه گوید بعد ازین  
 من دیگرم تو دیگری

(" I have become Thon and Thon hast become I, so that no one may henceforth say that I am distinct from Thee, and Thon from Me").

This well-developed humanism of the pre-Mughal period received a tremendous impetus, during the spacious days of Akbar, throughout the length and breadth of the country. Mr. Khaja Khau—a well-known South Indian scholar, and author of a series of highly stimulating books, in English, on Moslim philosophy and religion, as interpreted from the sufistic standpoint—writes in his *Philosophy of Islam* : " Moslim philosophy in Southern India is so much mixed up with that of Hindus, that, it is difficult to distinguish it ". As regards North India, in particular, so eminent a scholar as Dr. Bhagwan Das writes (in the course of an essay contributed by him to the Swami Dayananda Saraswati Commemoration Volume) :—" The natural and inevitable result of the historical processes was that Hindus and Musalmans were constantly influencing each other, affecting and changing each other's ways of life, as neighbours in times of peace, and even in war, for both Hindus and Muslim soldiers were often to be found on each side ". The result of this great cultural fusion—alike in North India and South India—led to the establishment of a broad-based humanism, which came to appeal equally to the Hindu and the Muslim. In the seventeenth century its greatest exponent and apostle was Prince Dara Shikoh, the elder son of Shah Jahan, who paid the penalty with his



life for being a humanist, when the fortunes of the civil war favoured his younger brother, Anrangzch, who was the apostle of dogmatism. Dara Shikoh is famous in the literature of Indian humanism as the author of a remarkable work, in Persian, called *Majma-ul-Bāhrain* ("The Mingling of Two Oceans"), showing how the fundamental conceptions of Islam and Hinduism are, in the main, identical, if only the study of both be approached in the right spirit, and from a correct perspective. The opening lines of Prince Dara Shikoh's book were as follows:—

بنام آنکه او نامی ندارد  
 به هر نامی که خوانی سر برآرد  
 بنام آنکه واحد در کثیر است  
 که اندر وحدتش کثرت اسیر است

("I begin in the name of Him who hears no name, yet who responds in answer to every name by which you may call Him. I begin in the name of Him who is the Changeless One among the changing many, and within whose Unity the multiplicity of the phenomena! many is confined").

So we find that Dara Shikoh begins his book by invoking the same Nameless and the Changeless One, of whom Tennyson put into the mouth of the "Ancient Sage" the sentiments already quoted, and also into that of Akbar, and of whom Shelley sang (in his *Adonais*) as "the One remains, the many change and pass". That is the alpha and omega of true humanism, the first and last of humanistic culture, the perception that behind the great everchanging phenomenon, but permeating it through and through, there is that of which the phenomenon is but a reflection and shadow—"the Nameless" of Tennyson and Dara Shikoh, "the One remains" of Shelley; the *neti neti* ("not that, not that") and the *tat tvam asi* ("That Thou art") of the Vedantist; the *Anal-Haq* ("I am the Truth") of the Sufi,

the " Ideal " of Plato, the " Substance " of the Jewish philosopher, Spinoza; the " Nonmenon ", of Kant, the " Infinite and Eternal Energy " of Herbert Spencer, (in spite of his calling it " the Unknowable "), " The Reality " of Bradley; the all-pervading spirit which (in the words of an ancient Greek philosophic writer) " sleeps in the stone, breathes in the plant, moves in the animal, and wakes to consciousness in man "—" the hidden and yet manifest vital principle ", which produces the multitudinously heterogeneous varied forms of the phenomena around us, by the thrill of the Divine Essence and Effulgence that is present in them all, and permeates each particle of every atom, in the Universe. Verily, as an Urdu poet has beautifully sung in a well-known hymn :—

یا رام کہو یا رحیم کہو  
 دونوں کی غرض اللہ سے ہے  
 یا عشق کہو یا پریم کہو  
 مطلب تو اسی کی جاہ سے ہے  
 یا دھرم کہو یا دین کہو  
 مقصد تو اسی کی راہ سے ہے  
 یا سالک ہو یا جوگی ہو  
 منشا تو دل آگاہ سے ہے

(Whether you call Him by the name of Ram, or Rahim, both mean hint Him, and Him alone ; whether you use the word *ishq* or *premi*, both mean the Love of Him ; whether you designate your religion as *dharma*, or *deen*, both mean the path that leads to Him ; and whether you call yourself a *salik* or a *jogi*, both these mean the same thing—that is, persons whose hearts are filled with the love of, and devotion to, Him).

Or as another Urdu poet has put it equally well :—

نقط تبارت سے نام ہی کا  
 دراصل سب ایک ہی ہیں یارو

حو اب صائي كى موج ميں ہے  
اوسي كا جلوہ حباب ميں ہے

(O my friends, the differences and distinctions in the things of this world are but in name; but, as a matter of fact, they are all fundamentally the same, just as the ocean-tide and the dew-drop, though seemingly different, are both in substance identical).

### VIII

And so it really is. It is, therefore, all the more regrettable that, of all persons, Iqbal should have missed appreciating and grasping the true spirit of this great humanistic synthesis, as developed on the soil of his own country, by the fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultures, during the course of centuries. He professed to be a votary and a disciple of Jalal-ud-deen Rumi, and I have quoted some passages from the poems of Iqbal to show the esteem and regard he professed for that great Sufi saint. As regards Rumi's famous poem—the *Masnavi*—Iqbal said of it, in one of his poems, that "he (Rumi) wrote the Quran in the Persian idiom" (*u ba harfe-e Pahlavi Quran nawisht*) a statement than which there can be no higher praise, for any Muslim writer. And yet it must be recorded by an impartial critic that, though professing loyalty to Rumi, Iqbal's own sentiments, in his poems, are far removed from those of the great Sufi poet. I have quoted in this very chapter—and also in some previous ones—verses from Rumi which give an indication of his broad-minded and intensely catholic humanism, to approach which even distantly scarcely anything can be found in Iqbal. The reason for Iqbal's failure is obviously due to the fact that—as stated by Dr. Latif himself—he identified all that he regarded good and great, in this world, with but one land and its religious evolution; whereas humanism, as established above, is wholly independent of all such

associations or bondage. This is what Iqbal never realized; and he thus missed the goal by reason of his wrong perspective of it. He continued till the last to flounder in the pool of differences in the universe rather than soar to the higher flight of unity, as proclaimed in the Quran itself. He does not seem to have been imbued by the truly noble sentiments embodied in the beautiful lines of the American poetess, Ella Wilcox :—

So many castes, so many creeds,  
So many paths that wind and wind;  
When just the art of being kind,  
Is all the sad world needs !

The Almighty had declared in the Quran, through the holy Prophet (on whom be peace) :—"Unto you your faith be welcome ; so my faith to me. Let those who know not God be led to Him, by those who know, with words of gentleness, and wholesome and wise counsel in kind ways. To every people have we given a law, and a way whereby they may reach God. If God had wished to do so, He would have made you all one people. He has not done so. Wherefore let every people, on the way prescribed for it, press forward to good deeds ; and let none laugh at other men, as perchance they may be better than themselves ". Now if those sacred words, ringing with the greatest catholicity, be correctly appreciated, interpreted, and understood, there can be no question of a difference, or a divergence, of opinion on any such point as is often found in the poems of Iqbal - namely *deen* and *kufir* or "faith and infidelity ". As a well-known Persian poet, Sa'ib, who understood the true import of the teachings of the Quran, in the passages I have quoted above, had embodied it in verse :—

گفتگوئے کفر و دین آخر بہ یکجا می کشد  
خواب يك خواب است گرچه مختلف تعبیرها

(Faith and infidelity meet at last, and end in the One, and they are just as the various interpretations of a dream, which differ, but the dream is one and the same. In other words, in spite of wrangling over a name, the upshot of free thought and faith is the same.)

It is the contention of this thesis that Iqbal cannot justly be regarded as a humanist, because of his having failed to grasp those fundamentals of humanism, which I have dealt with in this chapter, as he was too much obsessed with a holy horror of Hinduism as a religion synonymous with idolatry; and, as such, he had become incapable of appreciating the higher aspects of that religion in the same way as, for instance, Al Bairuni, Abul Fazl, and several others. He had thus incapacitated himself from appraising, at its true worth, the value of the fundamental teachings of Hinduism as contributing to the development of humanism. But all students of humanism are aware of the most valuable contribution made by Hinduism to the growth and expansion of humanism, to which I have briefly referred in this chapter. Not only that,; but Iqbal wholly misappreciated the genius of Hinduism as a great factor in the moral and social progress of humanity, and its tremendous capacity to outlive even cataclysmal changes, due to its infinite power for adaptation to its ever-changing environment. In the course of a letter Iqbal wrote to Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the 28th May, 1937—less than a year before his death—(according to the published text in *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah*): "It is clear, to my mind, that if Hinduism accepts social democracy, it must necessarily cease to be Hinduism. The modern problems, therefore, are far more easy to solve for the Muslims than for the Hindus."

*Prima facie*, this statement of Iqbal's would seem to be likely to be correct, since socially Muslims undoubtedly possess many advantages over the Hindus. But while that is so, the broad fact remains that it is the Hindus who have

made, during the last one hundred years, ever so much greater social progress than their Muslim fellow-countrymen—a subject which I have discussed at some length in a previous chapter. And what is it due to? Obviously to the fact that, when all is said and done, Hinduism has displayed in its history of now seven thousand years—dating it from the period of the Indus valley civilisation—a much greater capacity for change and adaptation to its environment, and a much greater willingness for assimilation of all that is worth accepting from outside, than perhaps any other of the truly great religions of the world. It is this, its truly protean capacity for adaptation and assimilation which enabled it to absorb Buddhism, with the result that not one nominal Buddhist was left in the country, since many centuries back, and which also equipped it to cope successfully with Muslims in various spheres of activities. According to Professor Blochmann (in his translation of *Aiyee-e-Akbari*): “Todar Mall's fame, as general and financier, has outlived the deeds of most of Akbar's grantees”, and “together with Abul Fazl and Man Singh, he is best known to the people of India, at the present-day”; while “before the end of the 18th century the Hindus had almost become the Persian teachers of the Muhammadans”—facts which there cannot be a more conclusive proof of the marvellous powers of adaptability possessed by Hinduism to adjust itself to changing circumstances—which is but another name for social advancement and progress. Those interested in pursuing this subject should study Dr. S. M. Abdullah's thesis (in Urdu) called *Adabiyat-e-Farsi Men Hinduon Ka Hissa* (“Hindu Contribution to Persian Literature”), and Professor D. S. Sarma's *Renaissance of Hinduism*.

Life being a ceaseless struggle for existence, all living organisms have to wage a continuous fight, with their ever-changing surroundings, for their escape from death; and this law applies equally not only to individuals and peoples but

to religions and institutions. The chief secret of success in this perpetual struggle is the capacity of the organism for adaptability to its environment. To be able to survive, it must be not only ever-resilient, but also alert and enterprising enough to adjust itself to its perpetually-changing surroundings, slowly but steadily, and as often as not, even quickly. The history of Hinduism is an apt illustration of its remarkable capacity to adjust itself to changing circumstances, or it would have perished long since. I am advisedly limiting myself in this discussion to a capacity for social change in Hinduism, in view of Iqbal's wrong observations about that religion, as quoted above; or it could easily be shown by reference to well-established historical data and facts that the capacity of Hinduism, in other spheres of activities also, had been no less remarkably progressive. Thus while it is perfectly true that (in the words of Iqbal) "the modern problems are far more easy to solve for the Muslims than for the Hindus", the indisputable fact remains that it is the Hindus who have till now—under the influence of western civilisation as imported into India by the British, through the medium of their literature, and also of that of the system and spirit of their administration—made far greater progress socially than the Indian Muslims, a fact testified to by all competent authorities on the subject. And it is the contention of this thesis that it has been due to the fact that while the advanced and progressive sections of modern Hindus had studiously left dogmas alone, and managed to forge ahead in spite of them, no large section amongst the Indian Muslims had been yet able to do the same, as they are still in the grip of dogmatists, whether of the old type of *mullahs* or *mutahids*, or of the newer type represented in the twentieth century by none other than Iqbal himself. It is on these grounds, that a student of Comparative Religion is justified in holding that far from ceasing to exist (as Iqbal thought it would),

Hinduism — so long as it continues to possess its capacity for adaptation to its environment, and assimilation of all that is best in its surroundings—will emerge successfully from its acceptance of new doctrines and practices, such as of social democracy, or any other—re-energised and re-jovenated. Muslims, as frankly acknowledged above, have many social advantages over the Hindus, but if in spite of the initial start, they have lagged behind in their march on progressive lines, it can be attributed to the cause I have assigned as primarily contributory to, if not responsible for, their backwardness—namely, their being in the grip of dogmatisms and dogmatists.

## IX

The discussions in this chapter had been occasioned by the observations made by Dr. Abdnl Latif about Iqbal being regarded as a humanist. They may be brought to a close with reference to the remarks made, on the same subject, by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, ex-Finance Minister of the Nizam's Government. He too (like Dr. Latif) made his observations, in the course of his address delivered on the Iqbal Day Celebrations, in 1943, held at Hyderabad, Deccan. Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, also, rang the same changes as Dr. Abdnl Latif, namely, that Iqbal was a humanist, and should be treated as such. In so far as he traversed the same ground as Dr. Latif, it is not necessary to sift the contentions, which are amply discussed above. The only point reiterated by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad was that Iqbal had so thoroughly and so successfully mastered the precepts, doctrines and dogmas of Islam as to have attained "that position in the world of Islam which never before was acquired by any sage, philosopher, or poet." Even construing the last sentence to imply the reference in it to "any sage, philosopher or poet", to be limited to the Islamic world only—and not outside it—the declaration is wholly uncritical as (even "confining" one-



self to the Muslim world) no one who knows anything of Islamic literature, or philosophy, can bring himself to assert that Iqbal either as a poet or philosopher, or saint or seer, attained a position, "which never before was acquired" by any one else, in the Islamic world. That would be an obvious travesty of truth, for it will mean that Iqbal was the greatest poet-philosopher, or saintly seer, that Islam had produced, thus placing him on a higher pedestal than even Iqbal's Master, Jalal-ud-deen Rumi, to say nothing of many others immeasurably greater than the Indo-Muslim poet. Viewed in this light the claim set up for Iqbal by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad is not at all likely to find acceptance in critical circles. It is but one more example of the numerous products of uncritical spirit by some of the undiscerning admirers of Iqbal.

But Mr. Ghulam Mohammad was not content with saying what he is reported to have said. He went further, and delivered himself of the following verdict, in the course of the same address :—"The real message of Iqbal is not for the Muslims alone, but for the whole of humanity. The message is not restricted to the Muslims, nor to the Hindus, nor to the Parsees, nor to the Turks, but is for the whole human race." Now this is but a replica of Dr. Abdul Latif's statement on the same subject, which I have already discussed, at some length, in the previous sections of this chapter. I shall, therefore, be brief in dealing with the contentions raised by the speaker, in the passage quoted above. Taking the Turks first for consideration as the only non-Indian people specifically referred to by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, no one who has read the fairly long dissertations and discussions, in this book, about the modern Turks—the complete secularisation of their State, the absolute severance of all connection between religion and administration, the purification or simplification of their language by the total exclusion from

it of no less than twenty thousand Arabic and Persian words, the change in Turkish script from Arabic to Roman, and many other similar acts establishing their having placed themselves outside the bounds of the Islamic world itself—can persuade oneself to believe that the Turks are going to accept the message of Iqbal, as conveyed in his Persian and Urdu poems, as a new gospel. As a matter of fact, Turkey had already come to be regarded as wholly outside the bounds of the Islamic world, in every sense of the term. The latest book on the subject, issued in 1943 (called *Islam To-Day*) does not at all deal with Turkey, and studiously ignores any reference to it, on the ground that that country "does not regard herself as an Islamic State", since "Islamic teaching and instruction in Arabic are not permitted in schools"—to quote the words of the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer of the book. One need not concern oneself, therefore, with the Turks in so far as the message of Iqbal is concerned.

The position of Hindus, in relation to Iqbal's message, has also been fully discussed in this book, and needs no further comments. There remain thus for consideration, the Parsees, who are mentioned by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, as one of the prospective legatees of the message of Iqbal. As regards the Parsees the position is that though their ancestors, in Persia, spoke Persian as their mother-tongue, more than a thousand years back, their descendants in India have for centuries past completely given up Persian, and adopted in its stead the language of their province, Gujerat; and it is Gojerati, and not Persian, which they speak, as their mother-tongue, and in which they have carried on for now several centuries, not only their literary activities, but produced some eminent poets. The Parsees are—to the very great advantage of India—a highly gifted people not only in intellectual spheres, but also in many others; but it cannot be said of them that they have hitherto displayed any extensive or intensive interest in mastering Persian, or even

Urdu. If a handful of Parsee scholars had betaken themselves to the study of Persian, their interest had been mainly confined to literature like Firdausi's *Shah Nameh* dealing with pre-Muslim period of the history and traditions of Iran. At any rate, (writing subject to correction) I cannot recall the name of any Parsee scholar who had yet displayed any interest in the Persian or Urdu works of Iqbal. That apart the mentality of the modern Parsee being highly practical it is not likely to be attracted by the dogma-ridden message of Iqbal. It is thus highly unlikely that a fairly large number of Parsees will now betake themselves to the study of the poetical works of Iqbal with a view to profit themselves by their teachings. In the result, it would appear that the views expressed by Mr Ghulam Mohammad are more rhetorical than critical, and the fact that even a cultured scholar like him should have allowed himself to have said, what is quoted above, clearly indicates that the critical spirit had not yet fully developed, in India, to influence the growth of literary standards on sound and healthy lines.

. Lastly, the Parsee may well challenge comparison with the teaching of Iqbal by recalling from his own scriptures the following noble verses, with which the *Gatha* closes, and which belong in their sublimity to the best of the great devotional literature of all ages :—

Whatever words and deeds are noblest, best,  
 Teach me, O Mazda, make my life express  
 Through Love of, Fellow-man, through Search for  
 Truth

The yearnings and the prayers of my heart ;  
 Renew, Ahura, through the Strength to Serve  
 My Life, and make it as Thou wishest—True.

---

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### The Popularity of Iqbal : Last words.

" We will speak out, we will be heard.  
Tho' all earth's systems crack !  
We will not bate a single word,  
Nor take a letter back,  
We speak the truth, and what care we  
For hissing and for soorn,  
Whila some fair gleamings we can see  
Of Truth's coming morn ? "

—James Russell Lowell.

" To know what you prefer, instead of saying ' amen ' to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive ".

—Robert Louis Stevenson

" For what is it that Iqbal does not give to him who seeks ? He gives strength to the weak and a meaning to strength. He awakens the urge for a full, all-round, harmonious, development of personality, for the devoted and selfless service of social ideals which alone make life worth the living. He gives to the pale anæmic calculations of the intellect the possibility to draw upon the unlimited resources of emotion and instincts, disciplined, chastened, ennobled by faith, and creative activity."

—Dr. Zakir Husain, in his address delivered at the Iqbal Day celebration, held at Bombay, in 1945.

Gird on thy sword, O man, thy strength endue,  
In fair desire thine earth-born joy renew.  
Live thou thy life beneath the making sun  
Till Beauty, Truth and Love in thee are one.

—Robert Bridges.

" Victory lies not in the realisation of the goal, but in a relentless pursuit of it ".

—Romain Rolland.

## II

Before bringing this book to a close, I may refer to a question which is not unoften put to a dispassionate critic of Iqbal: "How do you account for the poet's great popularity among a fairly large section of the Mussalmans in India?" To deal adequately with this interesting subject would cover a much larger space than is possible to spare for its detailed discussion, since it will have to traverse various aspects of what is now called "Mass Psychology", "Collective Psychology, or "Group Psychology" or by some other similar name. This branch of Mental Science is rapidly developing in the countries of the West. Professor McDougal's book, called *The Group Mind*, is one of the classics on the subject, which has now a fairly extensive literature. It is not possible to summarise here the results of its study. But I shall try to indicate briefly my view, with special reference to its bearing on the popularity of Iqbal, among certain classes of educated Muslims, in this country. But, before doing so, I may recall that even previous to this branch of Mental Science having been established as a subject of scientific study, there were writers who were familiar with the phenomenon now termed "Mass Psychology", and incidentally referred to it in their works. One such was the famous nineteenth century novelist, Charles Dickens. Endowed with great intellectual gifts and uncommon prescience, he understood and appreciated the problems connected with "Mass Psychology". In his immortal *Pickwick Papers*—published in 1837—Dickens had made some shrewd hits on the subject, in the course of the highly interesting chapter describing a memorable political contest, the parliamentary election, at Eatonswill, which may be read with pleasure and profit by the reader of today.

To turn to Iqbal: it has been suggested in a previous chapter that the poet saw only one side of a thing;

and hence was not an exact or sound philosopher. But that is the very reason 'paradoxical as it may sound) why he is, in a certain sphere, an important thinker, from the standpoint of the student of Mass Psychology. He saw only one side of a thing, but he declared and emphasized that one particular side so vigorously and assertively, to the exclusion of the others, that all those interested in that specific aspect, were not only attracted to it, but even fascinated by it. This is precisely what Mr. W. C. Smith meant when he said (in his *Modern Islam in India*) "that Iqbal is great because he said...what his followers were vaguely beginning to feel." Hence, the Iqbal Day celebrations now held, year after year, at various places—when scarcely any one thinks of that poet, Ghalib, or even of that eminent poet-reformer, Hali. It is this which explains the difference between the appeal of a religious teacher, and a dogmatic preacher. The latter cannot, like the former, point necessarily to more perfect ideals, but he leads people forward by the simple expedient of marching—and marching even backoningly—in the very direction in which they are either already going, or are willing to go. He thus but takes advantage of this innate desire on their part to move along a certain track, and helps to lead them on to it—a fact which is not only appreciated but admired by them. But intellectuals, and dispassionate critics, though they may not like it, or even deprecate it, should not necessarily condemn too readily this sort of guidance, and leadership, of the masses, or even of the stratum of humanity above the level of the masses.

There is undoubtedly need in the world for impartial objectivity ; the thinking that stands above all conflict, and coolly surveys, analyses, and judges. But there is need also in this work-a-day world of storm and strife—and to-day perhaps more than ever—for the type that mixes itself in the *mêlée*, on one side or on the other, that

inspires and drives masses, that formulates and voices the passions and the dreams of the average man, who cannot express his feelings and ideas, and so needs the leadership of some one who can and will do it for him. While (theoretically) thinking dispassionately is undoubtedly better than action, and stands on a higher plane, yet in practice action is naturally regarded better than even sound and most well-reasoned thought, if there is to be no stagnation in the world. Thus the activist leadership of the political demagogue, or the religious propagandist, may be, in actual practice, better in a sense (though compared with sound thought, it may be absolutely valueless) than the ineffective contemplation of the master-mind. The latter may ultimately lead to Truth, but it is the former that stirs mankind to various activities, without which the world would remain far too static. This important distinction between thought and action should always be kept in view in dealing with problems connected with "Mass Psychology", and its bearing on success of mass movements, and the popularity of their leaders.

## II

In support of the view expressed above, I may recall that Woodrow Wilson, once a college Professor, and later the great leader of the American nation at war (during the first Great War) declared his conviction that while it was indisputable that an intellectual man should have the time, and also the temperament, to listen to all the relevant information on a subject before making up his mind, or even deciding not to make it up at all (if he so chose to do), an executive authority had, at some crucial point, to close his mind, make it up then and there, and act immediately. He added—and rightly too—"that decision might be right; it might be wrong. No matter. One had to, and must take a chance, to refuse, or ignore, any further information; as one has to act, and act, too, there and then." These observations are quite germane to the

subject under disension. That Iqbal was not a great thinker of the exact or philosophic type is not likely to be seriously disputed by any careful or unprejudiced student of his works, or on a dispassionate consideration of the materials brought together in this book. But that he was undoubtedly great as a thinker of the activist type, may be held to be amply proved by the very veneration and devotion which his works had called forth, albeit in certain circles and groups only among the Muslims in this country. The reason of his great popularity was because Iqbal spoke not so much to those groups as for those groups; nor so much preached at them as for them; and preached remarkably well too the thinking with which they already were in absolute agreement, and in fullest sympathy. And it must be acknowledged that he spoke for them very ably, in the sense that he expressed their ideology in ever so much better a way than they could do, or could have done, for themselves. Hence, his wide-spread popularity amongst certain groups and classes of Indian Muslims, since he did for them what they could not do even half so well for themselves. Such a phenomenon is a well-known phase of human nature, with which one is familiar in other spheres of activities, as well. It is this very phase, or phenomenon, which is so striking a feature, in the domain of politics, in the popularity, among the masses, of the great leaders of public opinion, both in the West and the East—not less so in India than in Britain and America.

If my analysis be accepted as correct, then the criticism of a popular leader—in any sphere of activity—is, and becomes, a criticism not so much of him as of the movement that he leads or led, and of those whose views he had expressed, or expresses, in his writings or speeches. This, too, is the chief reason why (more particularly in India, owing to its greater backwardness) the mildest and most



reasoned criticism of leaders in any sphere of action—Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah, or Iqbal—is not in the least tolerated by their undiscerning admirers, for they naturally feel (though the feeling may be sub conscious) that to criticise even mildly their leader is to criticise the followers themselves—their own thought, action, and attitude, to which they themselves are wholly committed, and which as such, they all regard, in the nature of things, as reasonable and sound. But if Iqbal cannot, for the reasons set forth above, be fairly called a sound or an exact philosophic thinker, can he be described as the leader of a desirable movement? That is a question on which again opinions are bound to differ. Mr. Smith in summing up his views on this question (in his *Modern Islam in India*) declares—and his views will be shared by many dispassionate and impartial critics—that the movement Iqbal led is one so far away from liberalism, humanism, and harmony, and is so much based on dogmatism, and narrowness of spirit, that it can hardly be considered as a desirable one. But while that may be, and perhaps is, correct, the fact remains that when a whole movement (not of thinkers but of doers) is off the right track, it can be checked not by the profounder insights of the sound philosopher, or the impartial verdict of the critic, but only by some stronger movement, resulting from the combination of great, inspiring, and wholesome world forces. But that is purely wishful thinking which, for good or for ill, is no longer existent in the sphere of realities, as we are not living in an age of liberal and contemplative reason, or in even of armed peace. It is too much to expect, therefore, that what may be regarded by dispassionate critics as harmful or undesirable movements, are likely to be supplanted in the near future. We have got to put up with them—whether we like or dislike them—until the human mind is so revolutionised that it may develop better ideals and nobler aspirations.

## III

To sum up, and to conclude this thesis : Has Iqbal presented Islam in his works " in a true perspective ", and " in accordance with its true spirit "—to adopt the words of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. Not minding the poet's deliberate mistake in choosing, for composing by far the greater and the more important part of his poetical works, the language of Persia in preference to that of India—for the reason stated by him that " Persian suits best by nature for expressing my lofty thought "; or his pedantry and sesquipedalianism in interlarding his Urdu verses with uncouth and unfamiliar words and phrases, borrowed unjustifiably from Arabic and Persian, which makes his diction stilted, turgid, and inflated ; or his unwarranted tirades against western civilisation and culture, and all that they stand for in religion, morals, economics and politics ; or his indifference to the ancient and, on the whole, glorious civilisation, and wonderful culture, of his own country—while proud of his having mastered the secrets of the religion and philosophy of some foreign lands ; or his frankly low estimate of his country to the effect that " in the land of Hind the voice of life is ineffective, for the dead body does not come to life through the song of David "—thus betraying a sense of frustration, and offering a counsel of despair in connection with the great movement for the renaissance of India ; or last but not least, his wholly mistaken judgment on the effect and influence of his Persian poems on Muslim lands outside India, and especially in Iran—in spite of his wishful thinking " my voice has enkindled the old fire of Persia ", in support of which claim there is not a tittle of reliable evidence ; but to hark back to the main question (propounded by Sir Sikandar Hayat) : what about Iqbal's interpretation and exposition of Islam ? Did he perform his task " in a true perspective and in accordance with

the true spirit of Islam ?" We know that Iqbal took himself rather seriously as an interpreter and expositor of Islam ; for did he not say of himself :—

I am waiting for the votaries that arise at dawn  
Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire,  
I have no need of the ear of today,  
I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow.

But tomorrow is on the knees of the gods, and we can forecast it only in the light of the past and the present—the past which has been the builder of the present, and the present which shall be the builder of the future. Leaving, therefore, the question of "the poet of tomorrow", let us judge of Iqbal's position in the world today. Did the poet offer any interpretation of Islam which might appeal to the non-Muslims in India, or elsewhere, which might attract them to its great spiritual and noble idealism, and which might modify, even partly, the traditional exposition of this sublime religion, which hinders its acceptance by non-Muslims ? The answer is that not only it does not, but it makes the task of non-Muslims more difficult in appreciating Islam at its true worth, by reason of the poet's retreating in the twentieth century the differences and distinctions between *iman* and *kufr*, between monotheists and polytheists, and several others of the same kind and type, which have been the weakest point—to put it mildly—of much of Indo-Muslim literature, produced both in Persian and Urdu. Iqbal cannot also be credited with having made any contribution, worth the name, to the liberalisation of the mind of the Indian Muslims, by far the larger number of whom, while professing admiration for his works, are still far behind the times, as compared with their religious compatriots not only in Turkey, Egypt, and Iran but even with those in comparatively backward countries like Iraq and Syria. What then can we place to Iqbal's credit on a careful considera-

tion of his life's work? In the domain of politics and administrative affairs one can but recall his favourite theory of harking back to the polity of early Islam (of the seventh century), and his attempt at its restoration, or re-establishment, in the twentieth century Muslim countries, which he advocated strenuously in his poems, but which (in the words of Mr. Ghulam Sarwar) " offers no more than another Utopia to the world ", for which reason, as remarked by Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali " his (Iqbal's) influence was negligible ". As regards his influence as a poet, I have quoted already Mr. Yusuf Ali's views, in a previous chapter, to the effect that Iqbal was " an isolated figure ", since " he founded no school of literary thought ", with the result that his literary influence " is silent in literature and daily life ".

#### IV

In his critical study of a great Bengalee novelist, called *Sarat Chandra Chatterjee*, Mr. Humayun Kabir (a well-known Indo-Muslim scholar) makes some remarks, which are apposite and relevant to the point under discussion. He writes : " Bankim Chatterjee was not only a writer with a purpose : he was a partisan and a propagandist. Purpose is a necessary condition of great art, but propaganda destroys its essence by tying it down to a narrow and definite end. Labels are ruinous for an artist, and so far as Bankim Chatterjee can be labelled, he loses in artistic stature. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee shares with Tagore his artistic detachment. Both are purposive writers, but their purpose is never allowed to degenerate into mere propaganda ". Readers of this thesis will form their own opinion as to whether Iqbal is to be regarded as a purposive " artist ", or a " propagandist ". If they accept the view that he was not so much an " artist " as a " propagandist ", they will then agree to the consequential deduction that even in the most important sphere of literary activities.

Iqbal's failure, as a great poet, is established on the testimony of the duly-qualified authorities I have quoted in support of that view, which cannot be, therefore, seriously questioned by dispassionate and unprejudiced critics. To the question, therefore, whether Iqbal's poems—whether in Persian or Urdu—will survive the ravages of Time, the most optimistic answer that can be given, at present, is "wait and see". It will all depend on the growth and development of the mind of the Muslim masses in India, as the years roll by.

But a critic, if fair-minded and impartial, should not omit to add that it will remain to the credit of Iqbal—as rightly emphasised by Dr. Zakir Husain in the passage quoted as a motto to this chapter—that the outstanding feature of the message embodied in his poems was to place action in the forefront of human activities, in the sense that he preached that life is not to be merely contemplative but to be assertive; that is, to be lived passionately, and strenuously, since the goal of mankind is to be supremacy in preference to that of submission. One finds the same sentiment expressed by Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916), the famous Belgian poet and patriot, in the words: "Life is to be mounted and not be descended; the whole of life is in the soaring upwards". It is this robust and muscular philosophy—which coupled with the poet's denunciation of capitalism, and a suggestion for its replacement by an emotional but not a well-reasoned-out system of socialism—had appealed to a fairly large section of his readers among Indian Muslims. Hence it is that uninformed and uncritical socialists, and also aggressive reactionaries seek and find both consolation and inspiration in the message of Iqbal—since his teachings, as enshrined in his poems are (like much of the later Hindu scriptures) a mass of unsystematic and uncoordinated effusion, in which almost every seeker after support of his own ideals and aspirations

not only looks for but finds whatever he wills or requires. Yet when all is said and done, credit must be justly given to Iqbal for having popularised, if not evolved, a form of thinking which appeals to a fairly large section of his, co-religionists in India—though, from a critical standpoint, it may not stand the test of scrutiny. This aspect of Iqbal's message should be given due weight in a critical estimate of the poet's works ; and I gladly testify to it

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Last words : Truth, Tolerance, and Unity

" It is in the unity of her people that the future strength of India lies. Upon unity depends the position and prestige of India. For the due fulfilment of her destiny, unity is essential—unity on an All-India basis. I would urge insistently not to risk the splitting of the unity of India on the rock of particular phrases, and I would press that we should continue to aim at the unity of India even if differences of greater or less significance continue to exist, for unity is far more to India than is perhaps always realised. Geographically India, for practical purposes, is one. I would judge it to be as important as it ever was in the past, nay more important, that we should seek to conserve that unity. Indian unity is of great and real importance if India is to carry the weight which she ought to carry in the counsels of the world. I sincerely hope that India will go forward as a united country. But if that end is to be achieved and maintained, constant vigilance, constant effort, constant forethought, will be needed, as all that is relevant to the unity of India. A divided people cannot carry the weight that it ought to carry, or make its way in the world with the same confident expectation of success ".

—Extracts from the *Speeches and Statements* of the Marquess of Linlithgow, Viceroy and Governor-General of India (1936—1943).

" On the problem of Indian unity, I can only say that you cannot alter geography. From the point of view of relations with the outside world, and of many internal and external problems, India is a natural unit. That two communities, and even two nations, can make arrangements to live together, in spite of differing races or religions, history provides many examples. The solutions of problem have varied. England and Scotland, after centuries of strife, arrived at an absolute union ; in Canada, the British and French elements reached an agreement which operates satisfactorily; the

French, Italian, and German elements in Switzerland agreed on a different form. In all the above three were religious as well as racial differences. In the United States many elements, racial and religious, have been fused into one great nation, after the bitter experience of a disastrous Civil War. The Soviet Union in Russia seems to have devised a new modification of its already flexible system. Those examples are before India. It is for her to say which will most nearly fulfil her own needs. But no man can alter geography.

—Extracts from the Inaugural Address delivered by Lord Wevell, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, at the Central Legislature, at Delhi, on 17th February, 1944.

"India is a natural, geographic and economic unit: it can only be prosperous, efficient, and secure, if a good deal of co-operation, of give and take, exists between the different regions and communities. Artificial boundaries, restrictions, enmities and interferences, will make the development of India far slower, will defer for many years the attainment of health, welfare, prosperity, and security, as the birthright of every Indian."

—Extracts from an article by Prof. A. V. Hill, M. P., F.R. S., on "India's Scientific Development" (in the *Asiatic Review* for October, 1944).

"Every one wishes to have truth on his side, but it is not every one that sincerely wishes to be on the side of truth."

—Whately (*Essay*—"On the Love of Truth").

"The grand character of truth is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion."

—Sir John Herschel (*Essays*)

"If a thousand old beliefs were ruined in our march to truth, we must still march on".

—Stopford A. Brooke (*Sermons*).

"It is not so difficult a task to plant new truths as to root out old errors, for there is this paradox in men; they run after that which is new, but are prejudiced in favour of that which is old."

—Schopenhauer (*Essays*).



" It is easier to perceive error than to find truth, for the former lies on the surface, and is easily seen; while the latter lies in the depth, where few are willing to search for it ".

—Goethe (*Conversations*).

" Without seeking, truth cannot be known at all. Truth can be ground for every man by himself out of its husk, with such help as he can get, indeed, but not without stern labour of his own."

—Ruskin (*Essays*).

" Ultimately, our troubles are due to dogma and deduction; we find no new truth because we take some venerable but questionable proposition as the indubitable starting point, and never think of putting this assumption itself to a test of observation or experiment. "

—Will Durant. (*Civilisation*).

" No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth ".

—Bacon (*Essays* : " Of Truth ").

" I speak truth not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little the more as I grow older ".

—Montaigne (*Essays* ; " Of Repentance ").

" He who sees the truth, let him proclaim it, without asking who is for it, or who is against it ".

—Henry George (*The Land Question*).

" Truth is the most robust, and indestructible, and formidable thing in the world " .

—Woodrow Wilson (*Addresses*).

" Truth, after all, wears a different face to everybody. Whatever looks down in search of this sees his own image at the bottom."

—J. R. Lowell (*Democracy*).

" As for truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. Great is truth, and mighty above all things ".

—Apocrypha; (*1 Esdras*, iv).

" Though both (Plato and Truth) are dear to me, it is a sacred duty to put truth first."

—Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*).

" If you will take my advice, you will think little of Socrates, and a great deal more of truth."

—(Plato, *Phaedo*).

" To love, for truth's sake, is the principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues."

—John Locke (*Letters*).

" It takes two to speak truth—one to speak and another to hear.

—Thoreau. (*A Week on the Concord*).

" This above all—to thine own self be true;  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, Act 1.)

" Truth is Truth,  
To the end of reckoning "

—Shakespeare (*Measure for Measure*, Act V).

" Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd ;  
Beauty no pencil, beauty 's truth to lay ;  
But best is best, if never intermix'd."

—Shakespeare (*Sonnets*).

" Truth is always the strongest argument. "

—Sophocles (*Phœdra*).

" Who dares to say that he alone has found the truth ",

—Longfellow (*John Endicott*).

" Truth is ever best "

—Sophocles (*Antigone*).

" Then to side with truth is noble when we share her  
wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just ;  
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward  
stands aside;  
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified.  
Once to every man and nation comes the moment  
to decide,  
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or  
evil side.

They must upward still, and onward, who would  
keep abreast of truth."

—J. R. Lowell (*The Present Crisis*).

"Follow truth throughout your life. Real happiness in this world lies in one's effort to follow truth in spite of troubles and difficulties."

—Mahatma Gandhi, in an address delivered at Panchagni on 18th July, 1946.

## II

The late Dr. Edward Thompson (in his *Ethical Ideals in India Today*) refers to Iqbal—in connection with the latter's remark that Turkey "has passed from the ideal to the real"—as one who "reminds us of his Brahmanic blood and inheritance by reversing a famous prayer of the *Upanishads*", as suggested by the poet's above-quoted observation about Turkey. Be that as it may, all students of Iqbal may join—keeping in view his main object, the development and perfection of humanity, howsoever much he might have failed in achieving it—in the universal prayer, referred to by Dr. Thompson, which is found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, one of the oldest Hindu scriptures, and which represents the sublimest aspiration of civilised humanity:—"From the unreal lead me to the Real, from darkness lead me to Light, from death lead me to Immortality" I Inspired by such a sublime sentiment I bring this critical appraisal of Iqbal to a close, with a happy and cheering note on the emergence of mankind from the unreal into the Real, from darkness into Light, and from death into Immortality. Faintly echoing a similar, if not the same, sentiment (in the course of an article on "Religious Education through Fellow-Ship", in the *Hibbert Journal* for January, 1944) Dr. G. H. Langley—ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University—expresses his hopes for the future of the world as follows: "The age had come when all artificial fences are breaking down, only that will survive which is basically consonant with the good of all

men. We must prepare the field for the co-operation of all the cultures of the world, where all will give and take from the others. This is the key-note of the coming age ": Sharing fully such a hope, I bring this thesis to a close.

In his *Comparative Religion*, the author, Dr. A. C. Bouquet, takes as his text that " there is only one right way of persuading, and that is to present what is true in such a way that nothing will prevent it from being seen except the desire to remain in darkness ". It is impelled by such a consideration, that in placing this book before the public, I do not claim so much to instruct as to compel thought, challenge legitimate disagreements and honest differences of opinion (with a view to their ultimate reconciliation by means of fair, frank, and friendly discussions), evoke reasoning powers and faculties on some of the greatest things in life, stimulate thought on some problems of vital importance to the progress of India, as a whole, and excite a spirit of critical enquiry and mental unrest. It is these that I have attempted to achieve in this book, according to my lights. Whether I have succeeded or failed is not for me, but for my readers to pronounce judgment upon. I would venture to hope, however, that in returning their verdict they will keep in mind the very important point stressed in the first and introductory chapter, where it is discussed at some length, that this work not only suffers, but is bound to suffer, from the numerous limitations inherent, in the very nature of things, in contemporary criticism ; and its conclusions should therefore be regarded as tentative rather than definite, provisional rather than final, and at best suggestive rather than conclusive. But whether it be the one or the other, the main objective of this book is the quest of Truth, according to my lights.

### III

" All the schools of Islam accept as a fundamental principle that for centuries, for thousands of years before

the advent of Muhammad, there arose from time to time messengers, illumined by Divine grace, amongst all the races on earth, which had arrived at a sufficient evolution of their intellect to understand such a message." So write His Highness the Agha Khan, and his collaborator, Mr. Zakir Ali, in their *Glimpses of Islam*. And the question naturally arises that if that be the case, how it is that Islam in India is so narrow in its outlook, and intolerant of all other forms of faith and worship. Again, the same two authors go on to state their views on the subject of pan-Islamism as follows: "By pan-Islamism we do not mean political pan-Islamism, such as was practised by Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey. We mean a spiritual union of Muslims, a religious and moral unity of the Muslim peoples all over the world, and a consolidation of Muslim solidarity, and an up-to-date social and economic outlook." They clarify their views further: "It has always been the foolish, unfortunate, and unfounded political fear of Islam (political pan-Islamism) more than that of Hinduism or Buddhism, that caused the Christian nations to continuously attack Islam, and to belittle the life of the Prophet, exposing it to false and libellous interpretation." The above extracts are—like the whole of this book—a plea for broadmindedness and tolerance in all spheres of human activities.

Compare and contrast the words of wisdom quoted above, and also those that follow, with the wild assertions made, and gross intolerance betrayed, on our platforms, and in the press of the country, with the dispassionate, sober, and sensible views expressed by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan (Judge of the Federal Court, at Delhi), in the course of an address delivered at the Government College, at Ludhiana (in the Punjab), not long back. His words—breathing catholicity, tolerance, and universalism in regard to the influence and effect of the true spirit of religion on humanity—are remarkable for a keen insight into the higher things

of life, and betray that he appreciates the true spirit of Islam. Said the learned Judge :—" Religion is the way of life that should enable each individual to attain to the highest possible development in the spiritual, moral, and physical spheres. Its function is to establish and maintain the most harmonious relationship between man and his maker, on the one hand, and between man and man, on the other hand. Is it not an irony, then, that religion should have come to be regarded in this country as the principal cause of discord ? Where does the fault lie ? Does it lie with religion, or does it lie with us ? It lies wholly and entirely with us. The moment we import into the field of religious investigation and enquiry a spirit of earnestness, sincerity, and deep reverence, we shall deprive the vulgar and the ignorant, the demagogue and the agitator, of their principal weapon for the fomenting of hatred and discord. A person who is truly religious can never permit himself to be guilty of intolerance. If a substantial section of the intellectual classes of our country were to devote themselves to this quest for a fraction of the time that many of them fritter away in idle pursuits, it would not be long before India would occupy the foremost place in spiritual leadership of the world."

These are wise and weighty words, but we may add to the above striking observations of the distinguished Indo-Muslim Judge the remarks recently made, on the same subject, by the British Prime Minister (the Rt. Hon'ble Clement R Attlee), as reported in the (London) *Times* :—" The longer I live the more I value toleration as being of the essence of civilization, and the foundation of democracy. Toleration does not mean that one should not hold one's own views strongly. It certainly does not mean that one should be tolerant of evil, of cruelty, injustice, and oppression but, it does mean that one should respect the right of other people to their own

opinions. We have come through a terrible war in which freedom was challenged—freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the freedom of the individual to lead his own life. We have won that war, but this *fight for freedom and tolerance is never-ending. We must be vigilant all the time*” Mr. Attlee’s words of profound wisdom should command acceptance in all cultured circles. And it is on the basis of the exercise of the true spirit of religion, as expounded by the eminent Indo-Muslim Judge, quoted above, and of toleration (in the sense that “one should respect the right of other people to their own opinion”) as emphasised by Mr. Attlee, that this book has been written as a “critical appraisal” of Iqbal as poet and thinker, and challenges a verdict at the hands of qualified and dispassionate critics as a contribution to the impartial study and correct interpretation of the works of the poet. Much has been said and written by indiscriminating votaries of Iqbal from their own point of view. No one has a right to object to their having said or written what they liked, or chosen to say or write. But equally so have others the right to declare their conviction, how Iqbal, his poetry, and his thoughts and teachings, strike their mind, when they apply it to the poet’s works, in *their* quest of Truth, according to *their* own lights and interpretation.

#### IV

“We are born to enquire after Truth ; it belongs to a greater power to possess it”—so wrote the greatest essayist, Montaigne, in his world-famous *Essays*. And it can not be questioned, by any sound and serious thinker, that constituted as man is, he is incapable, by reason of his phenomenal surroundings, of knowing the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth—even according to his own lights. What he can know, at best, in his quest of Truth, are fragments, and obtain merely partial glimpses, but never the full fruition, or the complete vision of Truth.

It is, therefore, that search for Truth has been justly exalted by philosophers as the object of man's highest ambition and endeavour. That is why the famous German dramatist and critic, Lessing, wrote (in *Anti-Gotze*) that if God held in his right hand all Truth, and in his left but the ever-active impulse after seeking it, and choice was offered to man between the two, though accompanied with the condition that he must always and for ever err in its pursuit, man should turn with humility to the Almighty's left hand, and unhesitatingly ask for the privilege of seeking after Truth, saying to God :—" Pure Truth is for Thee alone ". That is the spirit in which this book has been written. It does not claim to offer so much of Truth (even as I am capable of conceiving it) as an effort at, and an endeavour for, search after Truth. And that is how it should be judged by an impartial reader ; for is not

Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the  
throne ;  
Yet that scaffold sways the Universe, and behind the  
dim unknown,  
Standeth God within His Shadow, keeping watch above  
His own.

---



## AFT. WORD : A VALEDICTORY COMMUNICATION.

(Addressed, to the author of the book, by Dr. Sir Ahmed Husain, Nawab Amin Jung Bahadur, K. C. I. E., C. S. I., M. A., LL. D., F. R. A. S.)

Dear Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha,

This is not an Introduction to your book on Iqbal. That has been done excellently by my dear and learned friends, Nawab Mirza Yar Jung Bahadur, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Dr. Amaranatha Jha, who tell intending readers what they may expect to find in it. Mine is a Valediction, bidding Godspeed to a remarkable volume which gives those who may read it, a perspective in which they may form their own opinion of the several interesting subjects treated in it.

I give the perspective in the form of a letter addressed to the author himself, because it will prevent me from going to extremes in praise or blame. The book itself contains many a quotation which shows how my countrymen (myself *not* excluded) are apt to transgress the limits of fair praise or blame, unless they are restrained by the presence, actual or imagined, of some force or authority that could check or censure them in some way or other. As I write, you are present before my mind's eye; and I know you will not allow me to praise you to the skies—just as some admirers of Iqbal "hailed him as the greatest poet of Islam in India", and others called "the Vedas and the Diwan (a collection of odes) of Ghalib, the two inspired books of India"! They indulged in suchrodomotades when they knew, or had any reason to believe, there was no one to check or contradict them. The posthumous flatterers of Ghalib would have said that his Diwan came from Heaven like the Quran itself, were they not mortally

afraid of the *fatwa* or fiat of the Moulvis and Mullas to declare them *kafirs* (infidels), or excommunicate them.

I would just refer in passing to your quotation of a passage from the speech of a learned and very estimable Doctor of Literature who, in a characteristically Indian fashion, goes to extremes in praising Iqbal, and calling him a prophet ! I entirely agree with you when you gently refute him by pointing out the difference between a prophet and a demagogue, and classing Iqbal in the latter category by using the word propagandist in a good sense.

## II

The first and foremost thing to which I would invite your readers' attention is that you are not an ordinary critic, who descants on the merits or demerits of the writings of a distinguished Mussalman, who was a man of letters as well as of law. I do not mind making you blush profusely as I tell your readers that you are a scholar of extraordinary ability and acumen. Your encyclopædic knowledge, broad sympathies, and tolerant spirit, befit you admirably to the difficult and delicate task, you have undertaken, of "appraisal", as you call it, or "critical study" as I call it, of the poetry, philosophy, and religion of a talented man of no mean learning and attainments. You had, as one of the writers of the Introduction points out, the inestimable advantage of "frequent social contacts", and numerous opportunities of "studying at close quarters" in order to fathom "the inner workings" of the great mind of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal, of blessed memory. You are eminently qualified to appraise and evaluate his "legacy to the literary world", if not to the world at large.

The second characteristic which I would impress on your readers is that you have no religious or communal bias of any sort. You are one of those Vedanti Hindus who, like Wajudi Muslims, say *Om* : "He is All and that All consists of friends." You are one of those,

I repeat, who consider themselves to belong to a single Brotherhood of Mankind Your book is appropriately entitled : " Iqbal : The Poet and His Message ", with the sub-title " A Critical Appraisal ". I have no doubt that it will have numerous readers, and I am sure it will give them the same, if not greater, pleasure and profit as I have derived from it. I am convinced that no reader will fail to be impressed with the fearlessness with which you express your opinions, and the *nonchalant* manner in which you displace a popular literary idol placed on an exceedingly high pedestal by a considerable section of public opinion in India. Please note, I do not say "struck down" but only "displaced", because you perform the operation not roughly as an inimical iconoclast, but only gently as a sympathetic surgeon. You follow the Vedic maxims: "speak the truth but speak it pleasantly," —the adverb includes in its meaning "carefully" as well as "conscientiously." If there is, on the one hand, absolutely no fear in speaking the truth, there is, on the other hand, no acerbity in your criticism of Iqbal, and his "legacy to the world", as some people would call his works. The careful and conscientious way in which you criticise your old friend's writings is really remarkable.

I have known some ssgo diplomats who did not disdain to adopt the ingenious device, which clever and charming young people are credited with, in the well-known couplet—

It is a happier (device than any other) that the secrets of the heart-  
 گفته اند در حدیث دیگران  
 captivators should come to be told in  
 the words of others

Probably because you have out-grown the charming young age, you do not go so far as to put your words into the mouth of others, or at least make others say exactly what you wish them to say, but you have an admirable aptitude for collecting and quoting a vast bulk of

opinions of distinguished men, learned scholars, and famous critics, before you express your own opinion of your author's views and attitudes. You never say anything without producing, or referring to, irrefutable authorities for it. Consequently the chapters of your book do not read like chapters of a book on criticism, but each chapter of it appears as a direct report of a speech or two on the text or texts prefixed to it. This was perhaps inevitable in these days of hurry-scurry brought about not only by the global war, but also by its contributory cause, the abridgement of time and space of the world by ubiquitous radios and aeroplanes of staggering speed. Your multifarious duties and engagements would not allow you to sit calmly in your study to write chapter after chapter with your own hand; you had, therefore, to dictate your texts and chapters to your stenographer, as quickly as possible, to save as much time as you could for your other and more pressing business. Naturally, therefore, your chapters assumed the form of speeches taken down verbatim by a quick shorthand writer. None the less has this method made your book any the less valuable. It gave you freedom to quote authors largely, and to express your thoughts and views in a conversational way. In more than one chapter you have made long quotations, saying that you do not make any apology for them, probably because they were so good that abbreviation, or a shorter extract, would spoil their effect on the mind of the reader, or would not serve the purpose for which you quote. Nevertheless each chapter makes a point or two so well that it does not fail to bring home to the reader that all is not gold that glitters in Iqbal's writings.

### III

One day when I was enjoying leisurely the perusal of your typescript, the *chaprasi* handed to me my copy of the *Times of India* of March 6, (1944). Like the Member of Parliament who soon after the conclusion of

one of the orations of Edmund Burke, in the House of Commons, got up, said: " Ditto to Mr. Burke ", and sat down, I also, but quite involuntarily, exclaimed " Ditto to Mr. A. A. Fyzee " after reading his letter published under the caption of *Ghalib Day*. He, like yourself, refers to outbursts of sentimentalists which I have already quoted, and says that they " go on calling meetings and delivering learned speeches without publishing either the collected works of Iqbal, or the critical edition of the *Diwan of Ghalib* ". Need I say that your book will be a most valuable contribution towards the compilation of such a scientific and critical edition of Iqbal's works, as Mr. Fyzee recommends? When it will be published, it will certainly be a better and more lasting memorial than a dozen laudatory speeches at scores of Iqbal Day celebrations.

Neither are Iqbal's uncritical admirers—undiscerning admirers as you call them—justified in their exaggerated praise of his achievements in the realm of literature. Perhaps to show that exaggeration is akin to misrepresentation, digressions and discussions of " side issues " are quite frequent in the book. You have carefully avoided politics. Iqbal was never a politician of either the right or the wrong sort, although his friends succeeded in dragging him to the political platform on a few occasions. His Pan-Islamism was less of a political than of a religious colour. You do not however content yourself with a critical study or " appraisal ", as you call it, of Iqbal's writings, but go further in some chapters, and discuss historical, social, or anthropological, questions of very interesting nature. Anent your description of true Hinduism, let me also indulge in a digression which is but remotely relevant to Iqbal's religious attitude and Pan-Islamism. The worship or reverence of some concrete thing, in stead of the Infinite and Absolute, seems to have been so natural to human nature that even some Muslims cannot help worship of graves and relics, &c. If they are prohibited

from the worship of صنم, an idol, they worship دشت, something that does not resemble idols or pictures which Muhammad (ﷺ) prohibited strongly and repeatedly. Hali castigates such Muslims in his inimitable *Musaddas*. It is one thing to respect and even reverence graves and relics, but it is quite another to fall down and worship them. No reasonable man would object to respect and reverence shown them. It is the worship of them that is objectionable. It is also in human nature to think of great and good men as *avatars* or incarnations, prophets or messengers of God. What is the Mulla's talk about احمدی ميم — "Ahmed" without *m*, which becomes Ahad ( One God )? Or his talk about نور محمدی, the Muhammadi light being eternal with God, if not thinking of Muhammad (ﷺ) as a kind of incarnation or *avatar*—euphemistically called "manifestation of God"? There is no religion in the world which *does not* directly or indirectly (1) *believe* in a Supreme Power that controls all, and is controllable by none, (2) *feel* that worship, obedience, or devotion is due to some great and good men as being incarnations, manifestations, or apostles of that Power, and (3) *revere* some concrete things such as idols, statues, graves, books, relics, &c. as if the souls of persons, whom they belonged to or represented, could reward (or punish) devotees (or disclaimers) in this world itself.

All mankind constitutes but one Brotherhood, generally because human nature is the same throughout the world, particularly because the "religious sentiment" (of which the constituents I have mentioned) is common to all persons in all ages and climes. There is historical proof that in the days of the great Akbar, and even of Aurangzeb, the heads or chiefs of several religions loved and respected each other as brethren. For example, in even later days, the founders or heads of the Temple of Sitaram Bagh and the Dargha of Nuruddin Shah Qadiri—religious foundations richly endowed by the Nizam's Government—called each other "brother", came together all the way from Naranaul to

Hydrabad, and were both received appreciatively and respectfully by the Nizam of those days. The latter became the Murshid of the Harem (inmates of the Palace, and the former the *Guru* of the Hindu *Musāhibs* (companions) of His Highness.

What you call "Humanism" I call "Pan-Islamism", which believes that all religions in the world are but branches of one, and the same religion (call it "Islam", or "Vedantism," or what you like) that has existed (اَزْ اَوَّلِ اَدَمِ) from Adam down to our times, and will continue to exist for ever. It is the belief in one God, who controls all and is controllable by none. The Pan-Islamist of this kind claims everybody to be his brother who believes in one God, and claims every country to be his own where there are believers in one God, whether they are *advaitas* or *duvaitas*, monists or dualists, in their belief of the relation of God to the world, does not matter to him in the least. Although he yields to none in his regard and reverence to the Arabian Prophet, yet he would not consider believers in One God as infidels, who lived and died before the Prophet's advent or who, knowing him, did not or do not acknowledge his mission. Iqbal would call them *kafirs* (infidels), but Sufis would call them *Muslims* (the peaceful), though not *Mominis* (the faithful). I readily admit that such Sufis (Pan-Islamists) have always been few and far between, but I firmly assert that they are "the salt of the earth".

#### IV

To return from the digression. I suspect that Iqbal, with his characteristic systemless thinking, wavered between two aspects of Pan-Islamism: the one political, and the other social. The political aspect was the belief (in my opinion, a wrong belief) that every country where any number of Muslims lived belonged to Muslims, and was an Islamic country. The social aspect was the belief (in my opinion, the right belief) that every one who believed in One God (whether he knew, or acknowledged Muhammad, or not) was a Muslim,

and all countries where believers in One God lived were Moslim countries—countries as Islamic or peaceful as any in the world. Iqbal when mastered by emotion (which his admirers would call "inspiration") cared little for consistency. When he wrote the first *tarana* (anthem) he was obsessed with Pan-Islamism of the political hue; but when he wrote the second *tarana* he was obsessed with the Sufistic view of Universal Brotherhood of Believers in One God.

Like a good appraiser you have taken into account both the credit side and the debit side of Iqbal's writings—praised them where they deserved praise, and criticised them adversely where you could not do otherwise, but you are always just and generous in both cases. Your appraisal is ideally good, since it does not go too far in depreciation (if I may so call your criticism), neither does it lag behind too much in appreciation (if I may so call your praise) of Iqbal's personality, poetry, and philosophy. No man can truly appraise the intangible asset a good poet, or a great philosopher, is to the people whom he addresses, rouses, and guides. All that a competent critic like you could do, and does, is to point out where the addressing, rousing, or guiding, is at fault, or is at its best. You have done *that* for Iqbal splendidly.

As far as I have read Iqbal's works—and I can not say I have read them all—I have not been able to find in them any "special message" for the world beyond the ordinary and oft-repeated messages such as : "wake up O Muslims" ; "go back to the pristine simplicity and purity of Islam" ; "act in the living present" ; "find thy God in thy own Self", and so forth. But he adverted to them most brilliantly and expounded and inculcated them most strenuously—which (as you emphasise) is in itself a fine achievement. However, as a poet, or philosopher, he did not found any school of literature or of thought. Iqbal's message to the people of India, and more especially to the youth of India, may be



dimmed up in three simple words: *Dare and do*. It is not a new message, but is (as you have pointed out) as old as the *Bhagāwad Geeta* itself;—"Action is thy duty, fruit is not thy concern". But Iqbal has presented his activism in such rousing words, and in such inspiring manner, that it never fails to touch the head and heart of his readers, Hindu and Muslim alike. I have no doubt but that it satisfies your "test of universalism" splendidly.

I would conclude this long and discursive letter with stating my own impression of Dr. Iqbal, received mainly from your book, and to a small extent from two or three brief "contacts", and some correspondence I had with him. I am second to none in my admiration of the qualities of his head and heart; but I feel I must follow your example in expressing my honest conviction without fear or favour. As a man he was certainly intellectual, but not quite charming; as a poet he was certainly imposing, but not quite convincing; as a philosopher he was certainly deep but not quite convincing, and as a Mussalman he was certainly devout but not quite broad-minded. Mark my words "not quite", by which I mean that Iqbal had personal charm, power of convincing, philosophic consistency, and broad-mindedness, but *not enough to match* his intellectual attainment, poetical height, philosophic depth, and religious devotion. I leave the readers of your book to judge for themselves how far my own "impression" of Iqbal's personality and performance tallies with your "appraisal" of them. Please remember that this letter does not pretend to give any thing more than a perspective to your fine and fair appraisal of Iqbal's works.

I wish every success to your book, and plenty of pabulum and pleasure for the thoughts and feelings of its readers.

With kind regards and high admiration

Yours sincerely,

Amin Manzil,  
Hyderabad (Deccan)

Ahmed Hussain (Amin Jung)

27th March, 1946.

## APPENDIX I

Since this book was completed there had appeared a biography of Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, written by his son, Mr. Azim Hussain, (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd. Calcutta). It contains some interesting remarks on the relations between Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and Sir Muhammad Iqbal, in the field of politics. These passages are reproduced below, with acknowledgment to the author and the publisher, of the book, as throwing fresh light on the work of Iqbal as a politician and a public man :—

“ In 1935, Dr. Iqbal, in his speech at the anniversary of the Aujuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, said : It is really unfortunate that this rural-urban question should have received the support of Sir Fazl-i-Husain who obtained power, in the first instance, not as a rural leader but as a Muslim leader of the province, but clung to his power by accentuating rural-urban differences. In this way, he secured as his colleagues some third-class men with no title to Government power, and the prestige and authority which the possession of such offices as ministarships secure, but who on that very account, viz., their mediocrity, look up to him as a superman. Some of the authorities also encouraged this policy as in this way they were able to break the force of the Reforms of 1919. The result of these tendencies has been that so far as the Muslims are concerned, real leadership has stood at a distance, while the thoroughly incompetent ‘ political adventurer ’ has come into the limelight.”

As the criticism against Fazl-i-Husain largely arose on account of Dr. Iqbal the latter's career deserves special mention, because in fact Fazl-i-Husain repeatedly tried to help him, but Dr. Iqbal failed to utilize the opportunities offered to him. In 1924 Fazl-i-Husain urged Sir Malcolm Hailey to have Dr. Iqbal elevated to the Bench but while the case was under consideration, Dr. Iqbal alienated the sympathies of officials by unrestrained criticism of Government. In 1927 it was proposed to send a Muslim Deputation to England to place before the Secretary of State the Muslim demands for the forthcoming Reforms. Fazl-i-Husain

asked Dr. Iqbal to lead the Deputation, and collected Rs. 3,000 for the purpose. This would have assured a first-class political career for Dr. Iqbal, but he refused to go, as it would have involved an expenditure of an extra few thousand rupees. Instead Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan agreed to go, and assured a bright future for himself. This did not deter Fazl-i-Husain from making further efforts to help Dr. Iqbal, and he proposed that on the termination of the term of Chaudhri Shanab-ud-Din as President of the Council, Dr. Iqbal should be elected President with the support of the Unionist party. Dr. Iqbal, however, alienated the sympathies of the party by criticising their policy and attacking them severely in the press, with the result that the majority of the Unionists refused to accept him as President. In 1931, at the instance of Fazl-i-Husain, the Viceroy nominated Dr. Iqbal to the second Round Table Conference. While attending the Conference Dr. Iqbal quarrelled with Sir Akbar Hydari, a prominent member of the Muslim Delegation, and this stood in the way of his success as a member of the Delegation. On his return to India he severely criticised the work of the Muslim Delegation, a criticism greatly resented by the Secretary of State, because it belittled the proceedings of the Conference.

The following year Fazl-i-Husain urged that Dr. Iqbal be sent again to the Round Table Conference, or alternatively should serve on the Federal Structure Committee or be sent, as a member of the Indian Delegation, to the League of Nations. In view of the previous year's experience it was reluctantly agreed to send Dr. Iqbal to the Round Table Conference. While the Conference was in progress he resigned and returned to India, and denounced the British Government in the strongest possible terms in his address to the Muslim League at Allahabad. It was, therefore, not surprising that, in spite of the repeated requests from Fazl-i-Husain, the Viceroy refused to appoint Dr. Iqbal as a member of the Public Services Commission. But nothing could deter Fazl-i-Husain from trying to help Dr. Iqbal again, and he recommended that he might be considered for appointment as Agent to South Africa.

Having failed to secure a Government appointment for Dr. Iqbal Fazl-i-Husain approached the Nizam of Hyderabad to help Dr. Iqbal. In reply Sir Akbar Hydari wrote: 'In reply to a wire to Iqbal asking him to wire definite extent and form of help, he has replied: 'Five months' work press, platform, interviews, party of five, rough estimate sixty thousand.' Do you think that I can ask my Committee and Government to shoulder such heavy expenditure?' Fazl-i-Husain thereupon while suggesting some modification as to the amount to be paid wrote: 'I think any assistance given to Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal to take two or three good men with him, and to give interviews and lectures, will be most beneficial to the State, as well as to Indian Muslims. I should like Hyderabad to accept the suggestion.' Dr. Iqbal, however, insisted on his expensive proposal, and it failed.

A similar effort was made three years later, when Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Mian Amir-ud-din; "How is Iqbal? sometime ago I heard he was not keeping well, and that he was in some financial difficulties. I shall be glad if you will let me know very confidentially the exact position. I have been a great admirer of his since College days. I once more like to make an effort to help him if I knew exactly how he stood, at present, in the matter of health and finances, and the real practice, if any, he has at present".

Mian Amir-ud-din replied that Dr. Iqbal had ceased to practise in 1931. His health was poor, and so were his finances, and he was rapidly losing his voice. He suggested that if a series of lectures could be arranged at Hyderabad, and a substantial fee fixed, it would help him considerably. Fazl-i-Husain prepared a scheme for the delivery of six lectures on 'Modern Islamic Thought' for a sum of Rs. 10,000, but the Nizam's government refused to agree to the terms proposed by Dr. Iqbal, and negotiations failed again. The truth of the matter was that Dr. Iqbal was not a politician; he was a political philosopher. He was an idealist, and could not understand that politics was a game of compromise. He failed to get office, or become a leader, because he was more of a poet, and a thinker, than a man of affairs.

The view of Muslim politics, as advocated by Fazl-i-Husain was generally accepted by Muslims all over India, but in 1936 a

radically different view of Muslim politics came to be advocated. This had its birth in the philosophical speculations of Dr. Iqbal. He started with the premise that on account of their religion and culture Muslims were radically different from Hindus, and the two could not possibly co-operate with each other either politically or economically. Therefore the only solution was the creation of a Muslim State distinct from the Hindu state. It might be true that in several areas in India Hindus and Muslims spoke the same language, observed similar social customs, participated in common economic pursuits, and belonged to the same race or mixture of races; yet the difference of religious belief was a difference which transcended all else, and should be the determining factor in every sphere of human activity. Dr. Iqbal was opposed to the territorial nationalism which had flourished in the West, and advocated a nationalism based first and last on religion.

Fazl-i-Husain saw grave dangers in this policy, and offered strong resistance by forming a non-communal party in the Punjab, while through the all-India Muslim Conference he advocated the formation of non-communal parties on similar lines all over India. That on account of this resistance Mr. Jinnah failed to achieve his object is clear from the fact that in the general elections of 1936 Muslim League candidates were returned to the provincial assemblies in a microscopic minority."

---

## APPENDIX II

### A STUDY IN "UNCRITICAL LAUDATION".

In addition to the passages quoted in the first chapter, the following also bear upon the contention that the book, in question, is an "uncritical laudation", as remarked by the reviewer of the *Times of India*; which view was even more strongly expressed by the *Statesman* reviewer:—

"*Asrar* and *Rumuz* are both masterpieces, and very few literatures of the world can produce many poems to match these. But from the artistic point of view even these masterpieces lacked the maturity of poems which were to follow". So even without "maturity", they were "masterpieces"! *Asrar-i-Khudi*, we are informed by the author, "attracted world-wide attention, owing to its translation into English by Professor R.A. Nicholson"—"world-wide attention" only after it had been rendered into English, six years after the appearance of the original in Persian. We are not informed of the reception which the Persian original had received till then. The author proceeds: "*Javid Nama*", which can be regarded as *Iqbal's* *magnum opus*", "is an oriental Divine Comedy". "As regards style as well as theme the poem is a masterpiece. Within few years of its publication the poem became a classic, and one great scholar proclaimed that the poem will rank with *Firdeusi's Shah Nama*, *Rumi's Mathnawi*, *Sadi's Gulistan*, and the *Divan* of *Hafiz*." One would very much like to know the name of the "scholar", who expressed that opinion, to test his claims to scholarship.

Of another poem we are told that it "is a masterpiece". In fact, we are told "there is no kind of poetry (except the dramatic) that he (*Iqbal*) did not write in Urdu and Persian. He wrote lyric, philosophic, epic, and satiric poetry. He wrote elegies and odes. He wrote quatrains (*rubaiyat*). In each kind of poetry his work will stand comparison with that of the world's greatest. His philosophic poetry reminds us of *Rumi*, his epic poetry brings to our minds that of *Dante* and *Milton*. His lyrics resemble those of *Pindar*, *Shelley*, *Ronsard*, *Hafiz*. His elegies will stand comparison with those of *Tennyson* and *Mutanebbi*. His descriptions of nature remind us of *Wordsworth's* poems". To add

other names to this list was scarcely necessary, it being sufficiently long and comprehensive. But the author was not content with what he had said already, and proceeds to inform us that "Iqbal has left lyrical poetry which can stand comparison with the finest lyrical poetry of the world". And he goes on to add that: "it will be interesting for us to investigate the cause which led to Iqbal's greatness as a lyric poet, which in fact go to make him one of the greatest lyric poets of the world". It would be noticed that in all the passages quoted above, it is invariably the word "greatest", or the word "finest", which figures. It is always the superlative degree; never the comparative, to say nothing of the positive. The same style of writing is continued:—"He (Iqbal) ranks with the greatest poets in the two languages: with Hafiz (in Persian) and Ghalib (in Urdu). The very fact that Iqbal is put in the same class as Hafiz means his inclusion in that select band to which no more than a dozen poets of the world can gain admittance." One may venture to ask the author which competent critic put Iqbal in the same class with Hafiz as a lyricist, or "among no more than a dozen poets of the world"—other than the author himself.

## II

As if all that is quoted above were not sufficient, the author proceeds to add:—"It is unnecessary to discuss here what constitutes epic poetry. It is sufficient to say that if Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* are epic poems, then *Taskhir-i-Firat* and *Javid Namah* are also epic". He then quotes a fairly long passage from a work by Mr. W. B. Worsford, who (while discussing epic poetry) says:—"In the nature of things the great epics can almost be counted upon the fingers of two hands: Hindu epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*—the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *De Nature* of Lucretius, the *Aeneid*, the *Nibelungen Lied*, the *Paradise Lost*". But Mr. Worsford does not even remotely support the author's view by including Iqbal's *Taskhir-i-Firat* and *Javid Namah* in his list of world's epical literature, with even the names of which Mr. Worsford was probably not familiar.

One would think that the "uncritical laudation" would have ended with the passages quoted above. But no; there

is yet more similar stuff to come :—" Iqbal's place in literature is certainly amongst the greatest in the world both as a poet, and as a prosewriter ". Though the language of Persia (or—as it is now called—Iran) was a foreign tongue to Iqbal, " even Persian is richer today (we are told by the author) so far as new phrases and expressions are concerned ", and the longer poems, called Mathnawis, contain " a wealth of thought and beauty of art, not easily met even in the greatest poets of the world ". The literary value of Iqbal's poetry in Persian is discussed in the chapter of this book dealing with that subject.

But one should bear with the author a little longer to learn his views about the Urdu prose writings of Iqbal :—" Urdu literature has a vast collection of letters noted for literary excellence, but Iqbal will be regarded by all students as one of the most interesting and impressive letter writers of Urdu ". As regards the pamphlets the poet wrote in Urdu—he wrote no pamphlets in Persian, in which language he composed only verses—we are told that they " remind us of Milton's pamphlets in English, with only this difference, that both for substance and beauty of language Iqbal's pamphlets constitute a hostage to immortality, and cannot be said to be written only for the age ". Well, if that be so, then poor Milton is nowhere in comparison with Iqbal, since the latter's pamphlets—far from constituting " a hostage to immortality"—had been (except one, the well-known *Areopagitica*) long since forgotten by the overwhelmingly large majority of the reading public. As regards the Introduction (in Urdu prose) to Iqbal's *Poyam-i-Mashriq*, we are told, that it is " in its thoroughness, its critical spirit, and general sweep, unsurpassed in the whole of Urdu literature. His command over language extorts our admiration, while his precision, brevity, and scholarly simplicity of language, combined with a consummate mastery of his subject, impart a special charm to the Introduction." Lastly the author sums up his conclusion in the following words :—" As a spiritual and moral force, there is no modern writer of the Muslim world who has touched his times so deeply, and Iqbal exercises this influence mainly through these essays, besides his inspired poetry". It is unnecessary to quote more to establish the contention, raised in the first chapter of this book, about the " uncritical laudation " of Iqbal by his undiscerning votaries.



## APPENDIX III

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The following alphabetical list of authors and books, referred to in the body of the text of this work, in which almost all of them are characterised, is likely to prove useful to the student of the subject.

#### A

Abdullah, Dr. S. M. : Contribution of the Hindus to Persian Literature. (The Punjab University, Lahore) 1947.

A useful reference work, and a valuable contribution to the cultural literature relating to India, during the Indo-Muslim period.

Abul Fazl :—*Ayeen-e-Akbari*. In three volumes. Volume I translated from the Persian by Prof. H. Blochmann; and volumes II and III by Colonel H. S. Jarratt, (Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta), 1873, 1891 and 1894 respectively.

Perhaps the greatest Indo-Persian classic on the subject of Indo-Moghal administration during Akbar's reign. Authoritative and comprehensive.

Affifi, Dr. A. K. : *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid-din Arabi*. (Cambridge University Press, London) 1939.

A standard treatise on Sufi doctrines and philosophy.

Agha Khan, H. H. and Dr. Zaki Ali: *Glimpses of Islam* (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1946.

A brilliant exposition from the modernist standpoint.

Al-Beruni :—*India* : translated with notes, and indices by Edward C. Sachau. In two volumes (Trubner, London) 1888.

Muhammad Al-Beruni, a native of Khiva, of Iranian parentage, was a famous scientist and a profound scholar of the tenth century. After having pursued the study of history, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine, of the Arab

world, he came to India ; and learned Sanskrit and also all those branches of knowledge that the Hindus had developed till then. In 1017 he was taken by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni to Afghanistan, where he remained until his death. Al-Heruni was an impartial but critical observer both of the past and contemporary events as well. His famous work on India—which is available in the English translation noted above—is a standard and authoritative work of the highest value on tenth-century India, and his views about Hindus and Hinduism are entitled to the highest respect.

Ali, Mohammad :—*Guide to Afghanistan*. (Kabul, Afghanistan) 1939.

Comprehensive, informative, and fairly up-to-date ; making accessible data not easily available to the average student, in India, about Afghanistan, its history and archaeological monuments.

Ali, Sheikh Akbar :—*Iqbal : His Poetry and Message*. (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Lahore) 1932.

For works, in English, on Iqbal's poetry and philosophy, please see under the poet's name, under the letter " I ".

Ali, Abdullah Yusuf : *Life and Labour of the People of India*. (John Murray, London) 1907.

The work of a distinguished Indo-Muslim scholar—catholic and broad-minded. Based on practical experience of realities, the author being an administrative officer of standing, the book is valuable.

Ali, The Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Syed Ameer :—*The Spirit of Islam*. Third edition, revised and enlarged (Christophers, London), 1922.

A great Indo-English classic, which (on its first appearance in London, in 1873) may be said to have ushered in the great Indo-Muslim political renaissance. As such, it is indispensable to a

serious study of Islam, in many of its aspects. Written by a modernist, it is stimulating.

Amery, Rt. Hon. L. S. :—*India and Freedom*. (Oxford University Press, London) 1942.

Speeches of a Secretary of State for India (1940-45), whose utterances are, as such, entitled to serious consideration.

Antonius, George : *The Arab Awakening*. (Hamish Hamilton, London) 1945.

A brilliant sketch of the Arab national movement, by a Christian Arab, it merits serious attention. It is undoubtedly a great modern work on the purely secular and non-communal aspects of Arab political consciousness; and of immense value, as such, to Indians, in the solution of their problems.

Arberry, Arthur J. :—*Introduction to the History of Sufism*, (Longmans, London) 1942.

A useful work, enriched with an Introduction by Sir Hasan Suhrawardy, which is highly informative on Islam in India.

Aristotle's Works on Science and Philosophy :—

*Aristotle : Selections*. Edited by W. D. Ross, (Oxford University Press, London) 1927.

*Aristotle*. By A. E. Taylor. (Jack, London) 1920.

*Aristotle*. By W. D. Ross, (Methuen, London), 1923.

Out of the enormous literature on Aristotle and Aristotelianism those mentioned above, for the benefit of the general reader interested in the study of the subject, would serve the purpose.

Arnold, Sir Edwin :—*The Light of Asia*. (Trubner, London) 1879.

Has retained its high position in the literature relating to Buddhism since it first appeared. A great poem on a great subject.

Arnold, Matthew :—*Essays in Criticism* : First Series (on "Function of Criticism" 1865); and Second

Series, 1888. (Macmillans, London) ; and *Essays Literary and Critical*. (Dent, London) 1906.

These essays, by the greatest English critic of the nineteenth century, are justly regarded as authoritative on the subjects they deal with.

"Arzoo", Syed Anwar Hussain :—*Surili Bansuri*. (Indian Book Depot, Lucknow) 1937.

Interesting as the work of a contemporary Lucknow poet, who is renowned for using almost all Indian words in place of foreign ones.

*Aspects of Iqbal* : A Collection of Selected Papers, (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Railway Road, Lahore) 1938.

Please see "Iqbal" under the letter "I".

Augustine, "Saint" : *Confessions*. (Walter Scott, London) 1890.  
One of the world-classics—philosophical and spiritual. It merits, as such, serious attention from students of Philosophy.

## B

Bailey, Dr. T. Grahame :—*A History of Urdu Literature*. (Association Press, Calcutta) 1932.

A slight sketch, but accurate, useful, and interesting.

Beg, Abdulla Anwar :—*The Poet of the East*. (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Railway Road, Lahore) 1939.

See "Iqbal" under the letter "I".

Bergson, Henry :—*Time and Free Will* :—(Sonnenschien, London) 1910.

*Creative Evolution*. (Macmillan, London) 1911.

*Matter and Memory*. (Sonnenschien, London) 1911.

*Laughter : An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. (Macmillan, London) 1911.

*An Introduction to Metaphysics* : (Macmillan, London) 1913.

The above are the principal works of Bergson (1859-1943) which are available in English translations.

*Works on Bergson*.

Henry Bergson : *The Philosophy of Change*. By H. Wilson Carr, (Macmillan, London) 1914 ;

also a smaller sketch based on the 1914 volume (Jack, London).

*An Examination of Bergson's Philosophy.* By David Balsillie (Williams and Norgate, London) 1912.

*Bergson for Beginners : A Summary of His Philosophy.* By Darcy B. Kitchen (Allen and Unwin, London) 1913.

*The Philosophy of Bergson.* By the Hon. Bertrand Russell. (Bowes and Bowes, Cambridge) 1914.

*Bergson.* By Joseph Solomon.

*Henry Bergson : An Account of His Life and Writings.* By A. Ruhe and N. M. Paul (Macmillan, London).

*Bergson and His Philosophy.* By Alexander Gunn.

*The Philosophy of Bergson.* By A. Lindsay.

*Bergson and Future Philosophy.* By G. Restrevor.

*A Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy.* By J. McKellar Stewart. (Macmillan, London).

The above fairly comprehensive list of books dealing with Bergson's philosophy should be sufficient for the student of Iqbal's philosophy.

Bhagwan Das, Dr. :—*Essay on Spiritual Purity : The Basis of Material Prosperity* (in "Dayanand Commemoration Volume", edited by Har Bilas Sarda (Dayanand Nirvana Ardh Shatabadi Sabha, Ajmer) 1933.

In the above essay the writer deals with great learning with the cultural relations between the Hindus and the Muslim immigrants from abroad, and their process of assimilation.

Birrell, Augustine :—*Obiter Dicta and Res Judicata.* (Duckworths, London), 1910; revised edition (in Duckworths "New Reader's Library") 1927, and *Collected Essays and Addresses.* Three volumes, (Dent, London) 1922.

Birrell's is a great name in the literature of modern criticism, and his works (noted above) deserve serious study.

Blake, William : *Auguries of Innocence*, in his " Poetical Works" in Bohn's Popular Library (Bell, London) 1914.

Blake is one of the great names in the literature of mystical poetry in English.

Boer, Dr. T. J. :—*History of Philosophy in Islam*. Translated into English by E. B. Jones (Luzacs, London) 1903. Authoritative and standard ; also comprehensive and impartial.

Bouquet, A. C. :—*Comparative Religion*, (Penguin Books, London) 1941.

Perhaps the best among the recent works on the subject.

Browne, Edward G. :—*A Literary History of Persia*. Vol. I. From the Earliest Times Until Firdawsi ; Vol. II. From Firdawsi to Saadi (T. Fisher Unwin, London) 1902-1906 ; *A History of Persian Literature Under Tartar Dominion*. Vol. III. 1265-1502 ; and Vol. IV. *Modern Times 1500-1924*. " Uniform Edition ". 4 Vols. (Cambridge University Press, London) 1928. *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*. (Cambridge University Press, London) 1914.

*Prof. Browne's Literary History of Persia* embraces in its scope the entire history and culture of Islam, in its manifold aspects. Nominally a history of Persian literature, it is really an imperishable record of Islam's enduring gifts to humanity in literature, in the widest content and scope of that term. Its authority is justly regarded as the highest in the subjects it deals with ; and it is absolutely indispensable to the serious student of Islamic literature, and culture, as embodied in the language of Persia, or (now) Iran.

Browning, Robert :—*Grammarians' Funeral, Paracelsus, Rabbi Ben Ezra, and Asolando* ; in his " Poetical Works," Two volumes. (Smith, Elder, London) 1912.

Browning is regarded by qualified critics as perhaps the most philosophical of English poets ; hence his

value to serious students of Iqbal, for purposes of comparison.

Bukhsh, Salahuddin Khuda: *Essays: Indian and Islamic* (Probsthain London) 1912, and *Studies: Indian and Islamic* (Trubner, London) 1927.

Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh was a great scholar of Islam, a brilliant expositor of its literature and principles, a liberal-minded and progressive interpreter of its doctrines, and a great reformer. His works, as such, merit appreciation. He also translated into English some standard German works on Islamic history.

Burke, Edmund: *Parliamentary Speeches*. The Collected Works. 16 volumes, (Revingtons, London) 1815-27.

A great "master" on Politics in almost all its multifarious aspects, whose opinions are still authoritative, on political subjects.

### C

Caird, John:—*An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. (John Maclehose, Glasgow) 1910.

A highly suggestive and thought-provoking work, in spite of its marked Christian bias; but it contrasts favourably with Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, as being free from dogmatism.

Chand, Dr. Tara:—*Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Indian Press, Allahabad) 1933.

A work of great merit, which deserves serious study; but its scope is mainly confined to the sphere of religion. The author has not been able to supplement it by a second volume covering other spheres of activities.

Cunningham, Joseph Davey: *A History of the Sikhs (1849)*, edited by H. L. C. Garrett, (Oxford University Press, London) 1918.

A great and historic work for writing which the author was dismissed by Lord Dalhousie from the

military service of the East India Company. He died broken-hearted. His work is accurate, sound and impartial ; and is held in high esteem by scholars, for its being both authoritative and free from bias.

## D

Dante's *Divine Comedy* :—

- (a) *The Vision of Dante*. Translated by H. F. Cary 1805-14). "Everyman's Library" (Dents, London) 1908.

The most popular rendering into English of this great world-classic.

- (b) *The Divine Comedy of Dante*. Translated into English by Longfellow. (Routledge, London) 1885.

The best-known of the many American translations.

- (c) *The Divine Comedy of Dante*: Translated into English by Melville B. Anderson. "The World Classics" (Oxford University Press, London) 1938.

The latest English translation—scholarly and faithful.

- (d) *Dante's Divine Comedy*. Appreciation by S. S. Nebru, M. A., I. C. S., (Allahabad Law Journal Press, Allahabad) 1931.

A good estimate of Dante, by an Indian scholar, which should interest students of Iqbal, who are fond of comparing the Indian poet with Dante.

Dar, B. A. : *Iqbal's Philosophy of Society* : (Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1938 ; and also *A Study of Iqbal's Philosophy*. (Sh. Md. Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

The latter is characterised in that chapter of this work which deals with estimates of Iqbal's Philosophy.

Day, Revd. Lal Behari :—*Bengal Peasant Life*. (Macmillan, London) 1874.

A famous story. The work of a convert to Christianity, who was a great writer of English, and was also fair-minded and impartial.



De Quincey, Thomas :—*Letters to a Youngman, and Essays on Pope*. In collected works of De Quincey. Edited by David Masson. Vols. X and XI. (Blacks, London) 1890.

A great name in nineteenth century critical literature, whose views are entitled to respect.

Dickens, Charles :—*Pickwick Papers*. (Chapman and Hall, London) 1837.

Not only a great humourist, and novelist, but one who appreciated problems of mass psychology, as evidenced by his wonderfully vivid sketches of the Eatanswill election in the *Pickwick Papers*.

Durrani, F. K. Khan :—*A Plan of Muslim Educational Reform* (Sh. Ghulam Ali and Sons, Lahore) 1945.

### E

Edib Helide : *Inside India* (Allen and Unwin, London) 1937.

An instructive and impartial survey of the separatist tendencies in modern India, by a woman journalist of Egyptian nationality.

Elliot and Dawson : *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*. In eight volumes. (Trubners, London) 1867-77.

Justly regarded as a classic, and still a standard authority on the subject it deals with. In spite of the advance in research in Indo-Muslim history, it retains its high position as, on the whole, an unimpeachable work.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* : Fourteenth Edition, 24 volumes (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Co., London) 1929.

The greatest and most useful work of general reference, in the English language ; and, on the whole, the most authoritative, written, as it is, by eminent specialists and distinguished experts. Although it had now passed under American control, the edition noted above retains its unique fundamental character.

*Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Four volumes, and the First Supplement ; edited by M. Sb. Houlsma, T. W. Arnold, and others. (Luzacs, London) 1913-38.

By far the greatest reference work on things Islamic, and the most authoritative on matters relating to Islam in all ages, and countries, and also on all subjects concerned with it. Its writers were mostly men of international reputation in Islamic learning and scholarship, and their treatment is absolutely impartial.

*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* : Twelve volumes. Edited by James Hastings (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh) 1908-21.

A monumental reference work on all Religions and systems of Ethics ; it is of the greatest value and highest utility to students of the subjects dealt with in it. Authoritative, comprehensive, and informative ; it occupies a unique place in reference literature. Its writers were scholars of the greatest eminence, and their treatment is wholly unbiassed.

Enver, Dr. Isbrat Hassan : *The Metaphysics of Iqbal*. (Shaikh Muhammad Aelraf, Lahore) 1944.

This book is characterised in that chapter of this work, which deals with the estimates of Iqbal's philosophy.

# F

Fallon, S. W. Dr. *New English-Hindustani Dictionary*. (Trubners, London) 1883.

Dr. Fallon was perhaps the greatest lexicographer of Hindustani. Apart from its great merits as a dictionary, it is enriched with a learned and luminous Introduction on Hindustani language and its vocabulary, which entitles the views expressed in it to considerable weight. Few foreigners had mastered Hindustani as had done the compiler of this, and other equally valuable, works.

Fauj, Mubsin :—*Dabistan Mazahib*. (Translated from the Persian, for the Oriental Translation Fund, London) 1843.

The author was a *Quazi* (or Judge) under Shah Jahan, in the late seventeenth century ; and his work is justly regarded as a classic in the literature of Comparative Religion. It is also probably the earliest work dealing with that subject.

Faruqi, Dr. Burhan Ahmed :—*The Mufaddid's Conception of Tawhid*. (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1841.

Based on research, and as such a meritorious production ; but the standpoint is orthodox, favouring dogmatism and discountenancing rationalism.

Fraser, Captain Hastings :—*Our Faithful Ally : The Nizam*. (Smith, Elder, London) 1865.

Justly regarded even now as a standard work on the subject.

## G

Geddes, Prof. Patrick : *Life and Work of Sir Jagadish C. Bose*. (Longmans, London) 1920.

The standard biography of the great Indian scientist.

Ghani Abdul :—*Pre-Mughal Persian in Hindustan*. (The Allahabad Law Journal Press, Allahabad) 1941 ; and *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court from Babar to Akbar*. Part I Babar (1929) ; Part 2 ; Humayun (1930) ; and Part 3 ; Akbar (1930). (The Indian Press, Allahabad) 1930.

Its contention that Persian written in India was quite as good, if not better, than that produced in Iran itself remains unsupported by the authority of any qualified scholar. The weight of authority is wholly against it.

Gibbon, Edward : *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited by Dr. J. B. Bury, 8 Vols. (Methuen, London) 1909-14.

This is the latest, and the best, edition of this world-famous classic in historical literature, and is enriched with learned annotations by the editor.

Goethe, Wilhelm : *Faust*. Translated into English by John Shawcross (Eric Partridge, London) 1943.

Perhaps the most famous work of the greatest German poet.

Greeves, Edwin : *A Sketch of Hindi Literature*. (Christian Literature Society for India, Madras) 1918.

A slight sketch, but based on a first-hand knowledge of the subject.

Grierson, George A. : *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan*. (Asiatic Society, Calcutta) 1899 ; and *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol. IX, Part I. (Government Printing Press, Calcutta) 1916.

The late Sir George Grierson (who compiled and edited the whole series of the "Linguistic Survey of India") was the greatest authority on the subject, and his views, as such, are entitled to due weight, and serious consideration.

## II

Habib, Mohammad : *Hozrot Amir Khusrav of Delhi*. (D. B. Teraporevala Sons and Co., Bombay) 1922 ; and *Sultan Mohmud of Ghazni*. (Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh) 1927.

The author, a learned scholar, had placed before the reader the results of his research in these two excellent and impartial biographical studies.

Hafiz : *The Diwan-i-Hafiz* (2 volumes, translated by Lt. Col. H. W. Clarke, (Government of India Central Printing Office, Calcutta) 1891 ; *Poems from the Diwan of Hafiz*, translated by Miss Gertrude Lothian Bell, (William Heinemann, London) 1897 ; new edition, 1928 ; (*The Rubaiyat of Hafiz*, translated by Syed Abdul Majid. ("Wisdom of the East Series" ; John Murray, London) 1910 ; *Hafiz : The Tongue of the Hidden*. (The Viking Press, New York) 1928 ; and *Renderings from the Diwan of Hafiz*, by P. L. Stallard, (Shakespeare Head Press, Oxford) 1937.

The literature on Hafiz is fairly large, in English but the books mentioned above would serve the purpose of the general reader interested in judging of Iqbal's contentions against the Persian poet.

Hell, Dr. Joseph : *Arab Civilisation* (Luzacs, London) 1948.

A masterly and impartial survey of a great subject.

Hossain, Syed and C. Willmott *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions*. (Compiled by Syed Hossain Bilgrami and C. Willmott. In two volumes (The Times of India Press, Bombay) 1883-4.

Though not technically "official", it is an authoritative record and survey, considering the official position of the two compilers. Though now out of date in parts, it is still the most comprehensive sketch of the subject it deals with.

Hughes, T. P. : *The Dictionary of Islam*. (W. H. Allen, London) 1885.

Though now partially superseded by the international and more voluminous *Encyclopædia of Islam* (ante), it is even now not only a useful and an informative work—compact and handy, in one large volume—but is also accurate, authoritative, and sound.

Hussain, Sir Ahmed : *Notes on Islam; and the Philosophy of Faquirs* (Shaikh Muhammad Ashruf, Lahore) 1922, and 1944, respectively. Both these works are referred to in the Preface to this book, where their author's position as an Islamic scholar, and a liberal thinker, is also touched upon. His *Notes on Islam* is perhaps the most liberal and progressive interpretation of the doctrines of Quaranic Islam.

Hussain Dr. Iqbal : *Early Persian Poets of India*. (Patna University, Patna) 1937.

An excellent survey of an interesting subject.

*Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Vol. II, Chapter XI ("Vernacular Literature")* (Oxford University Press, London) 1908.

Though out-of-date, to some extent, it is still highly useful.

Iqbal, Shaikh Muhammad :

List of the poet's works in English, and of those translated into English.

(1) *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. (Luzacs, London) 1908 ;

(2) *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (first edition, under the above title, issued at Lahore, 1930 ; second edition, enlarged with an additional last chapter, and issued under the title of *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford University Press, London) 1934 ;

(3) *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1943 ;

(4) *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Al-Manar Academy, Lahore) 1944 ;

(5) *The Secrets of the Self*. ("Asrar-i-Khudi") translated from the original Persian into English by Dr. R. A. Nicholson, (Macmillans, London) 1920.

(6) *The Complaint and the Answer* : Altaf Husain's translation of Iqbal's *Shikwah and Jawab Shikwah* (Sh. Md. Ashraf, Lahore) 1943 ;

(7) *Kulliyat-e-Iqbal* (of Urdu poems), edited by Muhammad Abdul Razaq (Ummad Press, Hyderabad, Deccan, 1924). The other Urdu and Persian works, noticed in this book, had not yet been translated into English. All the poet's works are referred to in the text of this book. The *Kulliyat* is no separate work but a collected edition of Iqbal's Urdu poems published till 1923. As such it does not comprise *Bal-e-Jibrael*.

Works, in English, on Iqbal's Poetry and Philosophy :—

Ali, Sbeikh Akber : *Iqbal : His Poetry and Message* (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Lahore) 1932.

*Aspects of Iqbal* (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Lahore) 1938.

Beg, Abdulla Anwar : *The Poet of the East* (Qaumi Kutub Khana, Lahore) 1930.

Dar, B. A. : *Iqbal's Philosophy of Society, and A Study in Iqbal's Philosophy* (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1933 and 1944, respectively.

Enver Dr. Ishrat Hasan : *Metaphysics of Iqbal* (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

*Iqbal As a Thinker* (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

Khan, Zulfiqar, Ali : *A Voice from the East* (The Mercantile Electric Press, Lahore) 1922.

Krishna, Roop : *Iqbal* (New India Publications, Lahore) 1945.

Saiyidain, K. G. : *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*. (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1938.

Sinha, Sachchidananda : *Iqbal : The Poet And His Message* (Ram Narain Lal, Allahabad) 1946.

Vahid, S. A. : *Iqbal : His Art and Thought*. (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

Ishaque, Muhammad Dr. :—*Modern Persian Poetry*. (Mohammad Israil, 159B, Dharamtala Street, Calcutta) 1943.

## J

Jaffar, S. M. :—*The Moghal Empire from Babar to Aurangzeb*. (S Muhammad Sadiq Khan, Kissa Khani, Peshawar) 1936.

Written on conservative lines, but a good sketch of the period.

Jamil, Tahir : *Hali's Poetry : A Study*. (Taraporevala, Bombay) 1938.

A good, critical, study of the subject.

Joad, C. F. M. *The Story of Indian Civilisation* (Macmillans, London) 1936.

A luminous survey of a great subject on scientific lines ; critical and illuminating ; also accurate and sound.

## K

Kabir Humayun : *Sarat Chandra Chatterjee*. (Padma Publications, Bombay) 1942.

- A critical and stimulating survey of the subject.

Kalidas : *Shakuntala and Other Works*. By A. W. Ryder, "Every-Man's Library" (Dents, London).

*Shakuntala or The Fatal Ring*, in the "The Scott Library" (Walter Scott, London).

*The Cloud Messenger*, translated by B. Charles King, in "The Wisdom of the East" Series; (John Murray, London) 1930.

Two of the greatest literary treasures of the world.

Karim Rezaul : *Pakistan Examined*. (The Book Company Ltd, 4-3B, College Square, Calcutta) 1941.

An analysis by a liberal Muslim publicman—useful and instructive.

Keay F. E. : *A History of Hindi Literature*. (Association Press, Calcutta) 1920

Though a slight sketch, it is accurate, sound, and appreciative.

Khayal, Taj Muhammad : *Iqbal as a Thinker*. Essays by various scholars, (Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

Written by several persons, the essays have no uniform standard; a few of them being of high quality, the rest not much above the average.

Krishna, Roop : *Iqbal* (New India Publications, Lahore) 1945.

Slight and sketchy, but penetratingly critical.

## L

Lamb Charles : *Essays of Elia, and Last Essays of Elia* (in the latter collection the essay on "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading." (Nelson, London).

One of the great classics in the literature of nineteenth century essays.

Lang Andrew : *Letters to Dead Authors* (Longmans, London) 1924.

One of the great works of twentieth century critical literature.

Latif Dr. Sayyid : *Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*. (Foster Groom, London) 1924; and



Ghalib: *A Critical Appreciation of His Urdu Poetry*. (Chandrakanth Press, Hyderabad Deccan) 1928.

Both good books betraying a critical spirit of which there is lamentable lack in Urdu literature, and in books dealing with it.

Lily, William: *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*. (1579); and *Euphues and His England* (1580). Reprinted in "Arber's Collection of English Classics."

It is the name of the hero of these two classics, which is responsible for the word "euphuism", and the style it indicates.

Lucretius: *De Nature Rerum* ('On The Nature of Things').

(a) *Titus Lucretius Carus on the Nature of Things*. Selected passages (in verse); translated by S. Salt. (Watts, London) 1912.

(b) *Lucretius on the Nature of Things*: translated by H. A. J. Munro, (G Bell, London) 1914.

(c) *Verse Translations from Lucretius*. By Charles Foxley (W. Heffers, Cambridge) 1933.

*Translations from Lucretius*. By R. C. Trevelyan (Allen and Unwin, London) 1920.

The study of Lucretius—the greatest didactic poet in Latin—should be seriously undertaken by students of Iqbal, who is mainly didactic.

### III

Macdonald, J. Ramsay: *Awakening of India* (Hodder and Stoughton, London) MCMX.

A stimulating work even now. The work of one who was later British Prime Minister, was long proscribed in British India.

McTaggart, W.: *The Nature of Existence and Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge University Press) 1921-27.

McTaggart was one of the two Cambridge Professors who influenced Iqbal's philosophical outlook. The other was Ward. Their works, as

such, merit serious attention by students of Iqbal's philosophy.

Madan, Indar Nath : *Modern Hindi Literature : A Critical Analysis*. (Minerva Book Shop, Lahore) 1939.

Useful for a critical survey of modern developments and trends in Hindi literature.

Marshall Sir John : *The Cambridge History of India*. Vol. III (Cambridge University Press, London) 1928.

Mookerjee, Mohindronath : *Biography of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Onocool Chander Mookerjee*. Eighth Edition. (Thacker Spink, Calcutta) 1918.

A standing example of what is called "Baboo English".

## N

Nietzsche : *The Complete Works of Nietzsche*. The first complete and authorised English translation. Edited by Dr. Oscar Levy, in 18 volumes, with one Index Volume. (Foulis, London) 1900-18 ; and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common. (Allen and Unwin, London) 1932.

### *Works on Nietzsche.*

*Philosophy of Nietzsche*. An Exposition and an Appreciation. By George Chatterton-Hill. (Ouseleys, London) 1912 ; *The Quintessence of Nietzsche*. (Warner Laurie, London) 1909.

*Nietzsche : His Life and Work*. By M. A. Mogge. (Fisher Unwin, London) 1908.

*Nietzsche As Critic*. By Thomas Common (Grant Richards, London) 1901.

*Philosophy of Nietzsche*. By G. N. Dolson (Macmillan, New York) 1910.

*Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness*. By Janko Power.

*Nietzsche*. By A. W. Knapp (Watts, London) 1910.

*Nietzsche. His Life and Works*. By A. M. Ludovici (Constable, London) 1910.

*The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. By A. Wolf.

*Nietzsche.* By Paul Carus. Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago) 1914.

A study of the works of Nietzsche, and also of some commentaries on them, is essential to a correct interpretation of Iqbal's philosophy.

## O

O'Malley L.S.S. : *Modern India and the West.* (Oxford University Press, London) 1941.

A well-planned composite work containing essays by specialists on various aspects of life and thought in modern India. It is a comprehensive compendium of sound and useful information on the subjects dealt with in it. The writers, being experts, the work is, as a whole, accurate, sound, impartial, and illuminating.

Omar Khayyam : *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, translated into English verse by Edward Fitzgerald (Trubners, London) 1859.

*The Voice of Omar Khayyam.* By Jamshedji E. Saklatwalla. (Qayyimah Press, Bombay) 1936.

*A New Translation of Omar Khayyam.* Jamshedji E. Saklatwalla (Luzaca, London) 1921.

*The Nectar of Grace ; Omar Khayyam's Life and Work.* By Swami Govinda Tirtha. (Kitabistan, Allahabad) 1941.

*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.* By Edward Allen. (H. S. Nicholas, London) 1898.

*Omar Khayyam And His Age.* By Otto Rothfeld (Taraporevala, Bombay) 1922.

*The Quatrains of 'Omar Khayyam :* Newly translated with an Introduction by Frederick Rosen (Methuen, London.) 1930.

*Omar Khayyam.* By Masud Ali Varesi. (Trubner, London) 1922.

*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam :* Literal translation with rendering into English verse by C. S. Tute (Sydney Len, Exeter, England) 1926.

*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam,* translated by Johnson Pasha. (Trubner ; London) 1913.

*Omar Khayyam : The Poet.* By T. H. Weir (John Murray, London) 1926.

The literature relating to Omar Khayyam, in English, is fairly extensive, but the books mentioned above would serve the purpose of the general reader, interested in the study of world-literature.

*Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse, The :* Chosen by D. H. S. Nicholson and A. H. Lee (Oxford University Press, London) 1916.

An excellent anthology, in which a poem by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is also included.

### P

*Persia, Latest Works on Modern*

1. Alexander, Constance M:—*A Modern Wayfarer in Persia.* (Stoöckwells, London) 1931.
2. Essad Bey : *Reza Shah.* (Hutchinson, London) 1936.
3. Farooqui, Mohammad Ahsan :—*The Silver Lion; A Biography of Reza Shah Pahlavi* (The Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow) 1939.
4. Filmer, Henry: *The Pageant of Persia.* (Trubner, London) 1937.
5. Merritt-Hankes, O. A. :—*Persia, Romance and Reality.* (Ivor Nicholson and Watson, London) 1935.
6. Hay, H. W. and Sidney:—*By Order of the Shah* (Cassells, London) 1937.
7. Moulvi, Prof. A. M. :—*Modern Iran* (Shah Bahram Printing Press, Bombay, 8) 1938
8. Elwell-Soutton, L. P.:—*Modern Iran.* (Routledge, London) 1942.
9. Wilson Sir Arnold, T :—*Persia,* (Earnest Benn, London) 1932.
10. Rajput, A. B. : *Iran Today* (The Lion Press, Lahore) 1945.
11. Haas, W. S. : *Iran* (Oxford University Press, London ; and Columbia University Press, New York) 1946.

Most up-to-date, and highly informative.

Plato :—*The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett. Four volumes (Oxford University Press, London) 1871, and *Selected Passages from Plato*, by Sir R. W. Livingstone, In "World's Classics" (Oxford University Press, London) 1940.

The great "master"—whom (or whose system as developed later, by his followers)—Iqbal ridiculed in his poems, and condemned in unmeasured terms, should be studied in the above works.

### Q.

Quran :—English translations arranged chronologically.

*The Koran*. Translated by George Sale (with a Preliminary Discourse) 1734.

*The Preliminary Discourse*, edited by the late Sir Denison Ross, (Frederick Warne, London, 1923) is—considering that it is now more than two centuries old—a remarkable essay, and merits very careful study even now. It had been issued as a separate volume, detached from the translation.

*The Koran*. Translated from the Arabic by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, 1861; (Dents, London; "Everyman's Library") 1924.

Rodwell's translation is famous for its attempt at arranging the suras in chronological order. Apart from that it is an excellent rendering—accurate, sound, and impartial.

*The Quran*. Translated into English by Mirza Ab'l-Fazl. (M. A. Narmavala, Surat) 1916.

*The Koran*. Prepared by various leading oriental scholars, and edited by Mirza Hairat. (I. M. H. Press, Delhi) 1919;

The above two translations possess no specific merit, which requires characterisation.

*The Holy Quran*: containing the Arabic text, with English translation, and commentary, by Maulvi Muhammad Ali ("Islamic Review" Office, Woking, England, 1917); and also, the translation without

the Arabic text (Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishat-i-Islam, Lahore) 1918.

*Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran.* (Ahmadiyya, Anjuman-i-Ishaat Islam, Lahore) 1938.

The translation, and the *Introduction*, represent the Ahmadiya school of interpretation, which differs materially from that of the orthodox school—the former being liberal and progressive.

*The Quran.* Translated by E. H. Palmer, Parts I and II (1888); both parts bound in one volume in "The Sacred Books of the East" series (Oxford University Press, London,) 1900. Also reprinted in the "World's Classics", with an *Introduction* by Dr. B. A. Nicholson, (Oxford University Press, London) 1923.

Palmer's translation is famous for its conforming to the text literally, without attempting to be "free".

*Translation of the Holy Quran.* By Al-Hej Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar (The Mosque, Woking, England) 1929.

The translator—a Punjabi scholar—had also composed two other works—*Philosophy of Quran*, and *History of Islam* (Vol. I).

*The Holy Quran.* Arabic text, translation, and commentary, by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1938.

A great work in its own line, it merits appreciation by scholars.

## R

Raza, Hamid :—*The Cultural Role of India* (Minerva Book Shop, Lahore) 1944.

An Indo-Muslim scholar's effort to analyse and interpret the cultural history of India from the earliest times. Interesting as a new experiment in the correct appreciation of India's cultural history by a liberal-minded and progressive writer.

Risley Sir Herbert :—*The People of India.* Second Edition, edited by W. Crooke, (Thacker Spink, Calcutta) 1915.

A great work in its own sphere, but now rendered to some extent obsolete by later researches. Nonetheless, it is still justly regarded as standard and authoritative.

Rumi Jalal-ud-deen :—*The Masnavi*. Edited with critical notes; and translated with commentary. By Dr. R. A. Nicholson. Vols. I to VIII. (Luzacs, London, 1925-1940); also translated with commentary, by Prof. C. E. Wilson, 2 vols. (Probsthain, London) 1910.

Rumi is one of the greatest authorities on Sufi doctrines, and perhaps the best interpreter and expositor of it in Persian literature. He is believed to have influenced the Indian poet's philosophic thought, and as such, his study is essential to students of Iqbal, who himself claimed Rumi as his "master."

### S

Saiyidain K. C. : *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*. (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1938.

Saintsbury George :—*History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*. Three volumes, (Blackwoods, London) 1902.

A classic in the literature of criticism. Not free from occasional blemishes, nevertheless highly authoritative and trustworthy.

Sarwar, Ghulam : "Some aspects of Iqbal's Poetry". In S. P. Shah : *In Memoriam Volume*, edited by Mrs. Shah (Lucknow, 1941); *Philosophy of Quran* (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) and *History of Islam* Vol. I (Islamic Literature Publishing House, Lahore) 1937.

Mr. Ghulam Sarwar is a scholar of distinction, and also a critical admirer of Iqbal. His views are entitled to respect.

Scott, Sir Walter :—*The Monastery*. (Macmillans, London) 1905. In *The Monastery* Scott ridicules "euphuism" as a style, through the mouth of one of its chief characters.

Sarma, D. S. :—*Studies in The Renaissance of Hinduism* (Hindu University, Benares) 1944.

A remarkably able, comprehensive, and impartial survey of the progressive trends in modern Hinduism.

Shaw, George Bernard :—*Prefaces to Dramas*. (Odham Press, London) 1938.

A notable series of essays in modern English literature.

*Everybody's Political What's What* (Constable, London) 1945.

Contains Shaw's maturest reflections on subjects of the day.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe :—*Song to the Men of England ; The Revolt of Islam ; Queen Mab ; Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude ; and Prometheus Unbound*, in the "Oxford Edition" of his "Poetical Works". (Oxford University Press, London) 1912.

Shelley is beyond doubt one of the greatest philosophic poets in the whole range of English literature.

*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, The : Revised and edited by C. T. Onions. In two volumes. (Oxford University Press, London) 1933

The famous abridged edition of the greatest work in English lexicography is for all practical purposes, quite as good as the larger edition, so far as the general reader is concerned.

Singh, Dr. Mohan :—*Handbook of Urdu Literature*. ("Careers," Lahore) 1937.

The author is a well-known writer in Urdu prose and poetry. He is the author of some excellent text-books, like the one noted above.

Smith, Vincent A. :—*The Early History of India and the Oxford History of India* (Oxford University Press, London) 1917 and 1919, respectively.

Both the above works are justly regarded as standard authorities—their author having been a very distinguished scholar.



Smith Prof. W. C. :—*Modern Islam in India*. (Minerva Book Shop, Lahore) 1943.

About the best work on the subject. It is quoted from at several places in this book.

*Speeches by Sir V. T. Krishnamachariar*. (Information Officer, Baroda) 1943.

## T

Tagore, Rabindranath :—*Collected Poems and Plays*. (containing *Sadhana*, *Personality*, *Gitanjali*, *Gardener*) 1936, and *The Religion of Man* (Macmillan) 1931.

*Works on Rabindranath Tagore*.

Tagore, Rabindranath :—*Rabindranath Tagore ; His Life and Work* By Edward Thompson. (Association Press, Calcutta) 1928 ; *Rabindranath Tagore : His Personality and Work*. By Prof. V. Lesny. (George Allen and Unwin, London) 1939.

Tagore's position in the contemporary literary world, and his international reputation, are well brought out in these volumes.

Tennyson :—*Higher Pantheism*, in his "Complete Works". (Macmillan, London) 1913.

Titus Dr. M. T. :—*Indian Islam*. (Oxford University Press, London) 1930.

A sound and brilliant exposition of the subject. Highly informative, and impartial in its treatment.

Thompson Dr. Edward :—*Enlist India for Freedom* (Gollancz) 1940. *Ethical Ideals in India Today*, (Watts, London) 1913

Both the books are interesting and thought-provoking, and make references to Iqbal, and his philosophy.

Tod, James :—*Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. Edited with Introduction and notes by William Crooke, in three volumes. (Oxford University Press, London) 1920.

Justly famous as a classic in Anglo-Indian historical literature.

Tulsidas's *Ramayana* :—Translated by J. Growse. (Ram Narain, Lal, Allahabad) 1937.

Tulsidas is by far the greatest Hindi poet, and his *Ramayana* is most popular amongst the masses in Northern India.

Turkey; Latest Books on Modern.

1. Armstrong, H. C. :—*Grey Wolf, Mustafa Kemal* (Arthur Barker, London) 1932.
2. Bhargava M, B. L. :—*Kamal Pasha* (The Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow) 1932.
3. ——— Grace :—*Turkey To-Day*, (Hutchinson, London) 1928.
4. Jackh, Ernest :—*Turkey : Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. (Farrar, London) 1944.
5. Lute, Sir Harry :—*The Making of Modern Turkey from Byzantium to Angora*. (Macmillans, London) 1936.
6. Lengyel, Emil :—*Turkey*. (Random House, London) 1941.
7. Mikusch, D. Von :—*Mustapha Kamal : Betwixt Europe and Asia*. (Heinemann, London) 1931.
8. Shah, Iqbal Ali :—*Kamal : Maker of Modern Turkey*. (Herbert Joseph, London) 1934.
9. Smith, John Parker and Charles :—*Modern Turkey* (Routledge, London) 1940.
10. Toynbee, Arnold, and Kenneth Kirkwood :—*Turkey* (Earnest Benn, London) 1926.
11. Ward, Barbara :—*Turkey* (Oxford University Press, London) 1942.
12. Waugh, Sir Telford :—*Turkey Yesterday, To-Day and To-morrow*. (Chapman and Hall, London) 1930.
13. Webster Donald Everett :—*The Turkey of Ataturk* : (The American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia) 1939.
14. Wortham H. E. :—*Mustafa Kamal of Turkey*. (The Holme Press, London) 1930.

## V

Vahid Syed Abdul :—*Iqbal, His Art and Thought*. (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore) 1944.

Spe

## W

Wahid Mirza, Muhammad :—*Life and Works of Amir Khusrau*. (University of the Punjab, Lahore) 1935.

Ts

A scholarly work based on research.

Ward, James :—*Naturalism and Agnosticism*. (1895-99) ; and *The Realms of Ends; or Pluralism and Theism*, 1911 (Black, London).

T

Prof. Sharif holds that Iqbal may justly be called "Ward's disciple".

Warner, Arthur and Warner Edmond :—*Shahnama of Firdausi*. In nine volumes. (Trubner, London) 1905-1926.

A good rendering into English of this greatest Iranian epic.

Williams, L. F. Rushbrook : *What about India?* (Thomas Nelson, London) 1938.

Thoughtful and thought-provoking.

Tit Wordsworth, William :—*Intimations of Immortality; Tintern Abbey, Sonnets, After Thoughts on the River Duddon; and Lyrical Ballads*, in his "Poetical Works", Oxford Edition", (Oxford University Press, London) 1913.

1

## Z

Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sir :—*A Voice from the East, or the Poetry of Iqbal* (Mercantile Electric Press, Lahore) 1922.

A small selection from Iqbal's poems, with an uncritical and laudatory Introduction by the editor.

2

